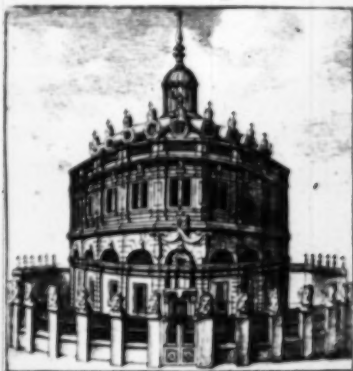


A
VINDICATION
Of the DIVINE AUTHORITY and
INSPIRATION of the *Writings*
Of the O L D and N E W
TESTAMENT.

In Answer to a Treatise lately Translated
out of *French*, Entituled, *Five Letters*
concerning the INSPIRATION of the
Holy SCRIPTURES.

By *William Lowth*, B. D. Fellow of
St. John's College in Oxford.



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JONATH. EDWARDS.

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June 13.

1692.

TO THE
Right Reverend Father in God,
PETER,
Lord BISHOP of
WINCHESTER:
AND
PRELATE of the Most
Noble ORDER of
THE
GARTER.

May it Please Your Lordship,

IT is the Misfortune of our times
to have Religion at once af-
faulted by a Rude and Igno-
rant Profaneness, by a Confident
pretence to reason, and by Sceptical

The Epistle

Sophistry. Its Foundations are attack'd by the Profess'd Enemies of God and Goodness: Its Mysteries are Ridicul'd by Hereticks, as if they intended to invite Atheists to their Assistance, to joyn a Helping Hand to the Carrying on so Good a Work, as the Exposing Religion, and making it appear Absurd and Contemptible. And as if it were not Task enough to Encounter Open Enemies, it hath the Hard Fate of it's Blessed Author to be *Wounded in the House of it's Friends*: whilest many of those who seem to Embrace it, are much more Industrious to Raise Doubts and Scruples about it, than to Establish the Fundamental Truths of it; or else lay down such Loose Principles, that Wicked Men may deduce their own Conclusions from them, and
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Dedictory.

can't but please themselves to see their Work done to their Hands, and Christianity Undermin'd by the Imprudence or Treachery of it's own Votaries. Thus by Degrees Men have proceeded from Arguing about Obscure and Nice Matters to question Known and Certain Truths; and from Disputing about the *Points* and *Tittles* of the Law, to Reject the Divine Authority of the whole: from thence to Decry all Revelation, because they cannot exactly Comprehend how God's Spirit Influences and Cooperates with Man's Understanding: and at last to cast off Religion in General. So True is that which a Great Man has Observ'd, "That the Disesteem of
"the Scriptures is the Decay of
"Religion, and through many
"Turnings and Windings at last

The Epistle

*leads Men into the very Depth
“of Atheism.

My LORD, The Design of the Letters which I have Undertaken to Answer, is to Perplex Men's minds with Difficulties about the *Nature of Inspiration*, and thereby render the Divine Authority of those Writings suspected, which the Church has always lookt upon as the Sacred *Depositum* of Divine Truth, which God has committed to it's Trust, and Design'd for it's Guide and Oracle. When first I saw this Treatise turn'd into English, I was in Hopes that some of our Eminent Divines, whose Writings are so Deservedly Admir'd for their Strength and Clearness, would have Vindicated the Authority of the Scriptures, and Clear'd their Title to Inspiration from those
Diffi-

Dedictory.

Difficulties with which Men that are Better at Pulling down than Building up, have perplexed it. The Subject has never yet been throughly Handled, and is Worthy the Thoughts of those Great Masters of Learning, Reason and Judgement. But after I had waited some time, and could not hear that any Abler Person Intended to take this Work in hand, I resolved to do my Best Endeavour toward the Defence of so Good a Cause, and give a Check to those Opinions which tend to Undermine all Revelation. And when I had finished my Design, there were many Considerations moved me to present it to your Lordship: not doubting but your Known Candor and Goodness would pardon the Confidence of this Address. Your Eminent Dignity in

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The Epistle.

the Church makes You deservedly Esteem'd a Pillar of Religion and Truth; Your Constant Residence in Your Diocess, and Your Care and Vigilance to keep up the Good Orders and Discipline of the Church there, preserve the Purity of it's Doctrine, and give a Due Lustre to it's Constitution; and your Generous and Obliging Temper Charms Men into a Compliance with your Good Counsel and their own Duty. And as these Considerations Embolden'd me to Present this Treatise to your Lordship, which is writ in Vindication of those Sacred Truths, for the Defence and Confirmation of which your Lordship is Placed in that High Station; so Your Signal Courage in Opposing the Enthusiasts of the *Late Times*, whose Vile Hypocrisy, and Lewd Pre-

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Dedicatory.

Pretences to Inspiration have made way for Open Profaneness and Contempt of all Revel'd Religion, Encourages me to hope that your Lordship will favourably accept this Work, how mean soever, whose Design 'tis to put some stop to those Lasting Ill-Effects which have proceeded from such Pernicious Principles. And beside these Publick Considerations, this Work does Implore your Lordship's Protection as being *Visitor* and *Patron* to the *College* of which the Author is a Member: who readily Embraces this Opportunity of Declaring to the World how Happy that Society esteems it Self in having the Honour of your Lordships Patronage, whose Government they formerly found to be so Great a Blessing; and withal is glad of so
good

The Epistle, &c.

good an Occasion of making this
Publick and Grateful Acknow-
ledgement of those Favours where-
with your Lordship has been
pleased to Oblige,

My LORD,

Your Lordship's Most

Dutiful Servant,

WILLIAM LOWTH.

THE PREFACE.

THE Age we live in deservedly bears the Character of a Curious and Inquisitive Age, which does not love to take things upon Trust, or blindly follow the Determinations of others. And I must profess for my own part, that I reckon a free use of Reasoning and Judging, as Valuable a Blessing as the Injoyment of our Civil Liberties, and look upon no sort of Tyranny so grievous as that of forcing Persons of Ingenuous and Inquisitive Tempers, exactly to square their Sentiments of things to other mens Opinions. But as the Best things are liable to be abus'd, so this Freedom of Enquiry has been made use of to Ill Purposes, and has Accidentally produced

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duced very bad Effects. For men have been so Fond of this Liberty, as to think no Bounds or Limits ought to be set to it, and at last to believe the Submitting to the Authority of God himself to be an undue Restraint upon the Use of Humane Reason: and the very pretending to such an Authority to be one of the Arts of Designing Priests, who by this Device endeavour to Enslave the rest of the World, and make them Think and Act just as they would have them. Thus many men have Reason'd themselves first into Socinianism, and then, which is but one Remove from the former, into Deism, or at least into a Coldness and Indifferency to all Reveal'd Religion. They think 'tis to Impose upon them to Oblige them to Believe or Practise any thing, unless they can see a Reason why it should be so: and cannot be perswaded that they owe God so much service, as to submit to those Laws which seem to them to have no other ground but his Arbitrary Will and Pleasure. Upon this account they reject the Use of the Sacraments, the Order of Ministers and Church-Governours who have

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have the Power of Dispensing them : the Necessity of being Incorporated into the Church, as a Society Founded upon a Divine Charter, and to whose Members alone belong the Priviledges of the New Covenant : the Meritorious Efficacy of Christ's Sacrifice and Intercession towards the Procuring men's Salvation : these Doctrines, I say, they will by no means admit to be True, because as they pretend, they cannot see what Natural Force there is in these things toward their producing their intended Effects. And when they have deprived Christ of his Titles of Saviour and High-Priest, tho perhaps they may still be contented to acknowledge him a Prophet and a Teacher come from God, yet they look upon his Coming into the World as a matter of no Great Consequence, and which men do well to believe, if they see good Reason for it : or if after having used Reasonable Diligence they are not convinc'd that 'tis True, there's no great Harm done ; since he came only to Reinforce the Principles and Duties of Natural Religion, which men's Reason will sufficiently instruct them
in :

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in : and if they do but live up to its Directions, and lead good Moral Lives they may be saved, whatever their Opinions are as to what they call the Speculative Points of Religion. These Opinions every body is sensible are very much in Vogue, especially among those who value themselves for being Free Thinkers and Reasoners. 'Tis evident likewise that men of these Principles are apt to look upon the Bible as a Book of no great Value, and which the World might very well be without : and are ready to declare that the Disputes it has occasion'd have done more harm than the Book has done good : and so from Undervaluing its Worth they come to question its Authority.

From what has been said it appears very probable, that the Prevailing of these Loose Notions concerning a Church-state and Revealed Religion, at first gave Rise, or at least hath since given Continuance to those Controversies, that have been so much Debated of late concerning the Integrity and Authority of the Scriptures. And the Atheistical Party have been
Indu-

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Industrious to keep alive this Dispute, as well knowing that 'tis doing no small piece of Service to their Cause, to weaken the Authority of the Holy Writings. Mr. Hobbs and the Author of Theologo-Politicus are the Chief of that Party who have engag'd in this Controversie: tho indeed they ought to pass but for one Writer, since the latter has taken the Substance of what he says from the former, and seems to have little of his own Invention; unless it be the Quoting of a Text now and then in Hebrew, which he does, I suppose, to raise in his Unlearned Readers an Admiration of his Profound Reading and Schollarship. And this Design of his has in some measure taken Effect, for his Atheistical Admirers are generally Ignorant enough to take him for a Writer of Sense and Learning.

*But to pass by these Profess'd Advocates of Atheism and Irreligion: the most considerable Writers that have been concern'd in the Controversie about the Integrity and Authority of the Holy Writings are Mr. Simon and his Adversaries. Whose Learning as I do
not*

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not intend to disparage, so neither will I take upon me to judge of their Secret Intention in the Management of this Dispute. I acknowledge them to be men of Learning, and as to their Design I am willing to think as Charitably as I can. But yet I cannot forbear saying, that tho they differ very much in their Notions as to other Matters, yet they seem to agree in speaking slightly and irreverently of the Holy Writers: they readily lay hold of any Difficulties which tend to weaken their Credit, and do not take half so much pains to Improve any of the Arguments that may be produc'd for them, as they do to Urge Objections against them. But however, I must say thus much in behalf of Mr. Simon, that many, to shew their good Will to the Bible, make him say much Worse things than he really does, and such as they would fain have him say, and would be glad if they could Vouch his Authority for. They are Industrious to make the world believe, that if we will take his Judgment, there have been so many Corruptions and Alterations made in the Text of
the

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the Bible, that 'tis impossible to tell which is the True and which is the False Reading. Mr. Dryden particularly in his Religio Laici, makes this Comment upon Mr. Simon's Critick, and tells us, as delivering that Author's sense, that the Jews have Let in Gross Errors to corrupt the Text,

Omitted Paragraphs, ----- and With vain Traditions stop'd the Gaping Fence.

Now one would think by this Account of his Work, that Mr. Simon had expressly asserted that the Jews had Wilfully and Designedly Corrupted the Original, by Adding to and Taking away from it as they thought fit. But in my Opinion 'tis taking a greater Liberty than Poetry it self will allow, to make a man speak quite contrary to his Sense and Meaning. For Mr. Simon makes it his Business to prove in several places of his Book, that the Jews have not corrupted the Hebrew Text, and answers the Arguments that are usually brought for that Opinion. All that he affirms as to this matter is, that the Bible has

a Critique upon the O. T. l. 1. ch. 17, 18, 19 l. 2. c. 4.

b been

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been obnoxious to the same Corruptions that other Books are, through the Ignorance or Negligence of Transcribers; and that such kind of Faults crept into the Text in those Ages chiefly that did not mind the Niceties of Criticism: and therefore the proper way to Reform those Errors is by Correcting the Suspected Places according to the Rules of that Art, and by diligent Comparing of Copies, as Criticks correct other Books, and the Massorets have already the Hebrew Text. And as for the Additions which are supposed by many to have been made to the Original Text, he supposes them inserted by Prophets, whereof there was a constant Succession, whose Business 'twas to take Care of the Publick Records. How true this Hypothesis is, 'tis not my Business to examine, 'tis sufficient to my present Purpose, that Mr. Simon does not represent these Additions as so many Corruptions of the Text. So that in this Case Mr. D. has Misrepresented Mr. Simon's Text, as well as that of the Bible: and put such a Gloss upon it, as it does not appear that he ever
inten-

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intended, as far as can be gathered from his Words. But I shall pursue this Matter no further, because Mr. D. may think it hard measure to urge any thing said in his *Religio Laici* against him at this time of day, when he has alter'd his Mind in so many Particulars since the Writing of that Poem, and has made Amends for his Former Incredulity by turning Advocate for Implicite Faith.

One of Mr. Simon's Antagonists, whom he and the rest of the World take to be Mr. Le Clerc, publish'd those Letters which I have undertaken to answer: the Two First of them in his *Sentimens de Theologiens de Hollande sur l' Histoire Critique*, &c. the Rest in the Defence of the Sentiments. Who is the Author of these Letters, whether Mr. Le Clerc himself, or as he pretends, a Friend of his whom he calls Mr. N: signifies little to the Controversie it self, and therefore I do not think it worth while to enquire. And as to the Author's Design in writing these Tracts, whether they were writ by way of Enquiry only, or out of a Design to undermine

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4 Eng.
Ed. p. 38.
French
p. 229.

c Fr. p.
245.
Eng. p.
51.

the Authority of the Scriptures, I shall not take upon me to Determine, but shall leave that to the Searcher of Hearts. Charity that believes all things, prompts me to believe the Author's solemn Protestation which he makes^b, that he disowns the ill Consequences which some have drawn from his Principles: and his Arguments for the Christian Religion which are contain'd in the Last Letter, incourage me to persist in that Christian Perswasion. However when I found the Author earnestly desirous^c that some body would fairly answer him, and endeavour to give further Light to this Matter: and withall was sensible that he has laid down several Assertions, which tend to lessen the Authority and Credit of the Sacred Writers, and that Ill men have made use of them to this purpose, as 'tis their constant Method to run away with any thing that seems to favour their side, but to overlook what makes against them: all these Considerations perswaded me to Undertake a particular Examination of all those Passages in these Letters, that reflect upon the Holy

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Holy Pen-men or their Writings.

I know Mr. Simon has made a brief Answer to all the Material Objections of this Author: the Substance of which is inserted in the Fourth Letter together with Mr. N's Reply. But I must freely profess, I am not at all satisfied with Mr. Simon's Performance, and his Answers seem to have been drawn up in Hast, without a thorow Examination of the Force of the Objections. Perhaps Mr. Simon is not so well vers'd in the Subtilties of Reasoning, as he is in the Nicities of Criticism. And indeed Both his Answers to Mr. Le Clerc discover as much: where he spends most of his time in Railing against the Protestants, which might much better have been imployed in Vindicating his own Principles from his Adversaries Objections, or Defending those Common Truths in which the Generality both of Protestants and Papists agree, tho neither he nor his Adversaries seem to have any great regard for them. But this is the usual Fault of such Zealots, as Mr. Simon hath of late discover'd himself to be, that they are

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more concern'd for the particular Opinions of their own Party, than for the Fundamental Articles of our Common Christianity: and therefore they very often advance such Arguments in Defence of their own particular Doctrines, which if they are pursued further, undermine the Foundation of Christianity it self, or it may be of Religion in General. Of which Mr. Simon himself is an Instance, who has taken a great deal of Pains to weaken the Authority of the Scripture Text, on purpose to set up the Certainty of Tradition in its place. But I believe another Reason may be assign'd of Mr. Simon's Fierceness against the Protestants; and that is, because he lives in a Country where Heresy now-adays is reckon'd a greater Crime than Infidelity, and 'tis less dangerous to be thought no Christian than no Catholick. And consequently it more nearly concern'd Mr. Simon, to clear himself from the Suspicion of Heresy, than to prove himself a good Christian: who perhaps in the Judgment of the World, he stands in need of an Apology in that respect, as much
as

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as in the other. And perhaps he could not take a better Method, to atone for his Disrespect towards the Scriptures, and to regain the Favour of his Superiours whose Displeasure he has felt upon that Account, than by crying up in Opposition to them, the Infallibility of Tradition and the Authority of the Church, and Inveighing against the Protestants with a great deal of Bitterness and Virulency.

*And since Mr. Simon's Answer gives so little Satisfaction to the Difficulties which this Author has started concerning the Inspiration of the Scriptures, I thought it might be an useful thing to examine the Substance of these Letters over again, and Vindicate the holy Writings from this Author's Objections. I must leave it to the Reader to judge of the Performance. All I shall say for my self is, That I have manag'd the Dispute with all the Calmness, and Freedom from Passion, which becomes an Impartial Searcher after Truth: and in that respect I hope I have fully satisfied the Desire of my Antagonist^d.
I have kept my self close to his main*

^d Fr. p.

245.

Erg. p.

51.

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Design: which is not to question the Veracity of the Holy Writers, or the Truth of the Doctrine or Matters of Fact which they deliver, but only to propose some Doubts and Questions, How far they were Inspir'd either with the Matter or Words which they writ. So that in this Discourse men must not expect I should handle all the Arguments for the Truth of the Scriptures and the Christian Religion, which are proper to be alledg'd against Atheists and Infidels. This as 'tis forreign to the present Design, so it has been done so Often and so Fully by several Learned men, and amongst others by this very Author in his Fifth Letter, that nothing more need or can be said upon this Subject. And if men will still shut their eyes against all Conviction, we must e'en despair of doing any good upon them, and can only say to them in the words of the Apostle, He that is ignorant, let him be ignorant: and If our Gospel be hid, 'tis hid to them that are lost, whose minds the God of this world hath blinded. However to do what Service

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I am able to the Cause of Religion, and to make this Discourse as useful as I can, I have ventur'd to go a little beyond the Bounds which my Adversary hath set me, and have endeavour'd briefly to explain the Nature and Design of the Prophetical Writings: where I have discours'd upon some things not commonly treated of, the Explaining of which I hope may tend to Illustrate that noble part of the Scripture, and remove some Prejudices against the Authority of the Prophets, which have been greedily entertain'd by such persons as are apt to be unreasonably Suspicious and Jealous of being Impos'd upon, and because there have been False Prophets, think 'tis impossible there should be True ones.

*If I have been guilty of any Mistakes, I hope the Reader will the more easily pardon them, when he considers the Niceness of the Subject, and that it has never yet been purposely treated of by any Writer that I know, as our Author himself observes: so *Ubi sup.* that, as he truly adds, A man must fetch all out of his own Stock that intends to Answer him. How-
ever*

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ever if this Discourse do not prove satisfactory, I hope 'twill be the occasion of Engaging some Abler Pen in this Cause, and if that be the only Good it does, it will not be altogether Unserviceable.

In the last place, I must desire of those who think I have not carried the Inspiration of the Scriptures so high as I ought, not to be Angry with me, or uncharitably Censure me, as if I design'd to Betray the Cause which I pretend to maintain: but if they are not satisfied with my Performance, to Undertake the Argument themselves, and do Justice to so Good a Cause. I assure them I shall heartily wish them Success in their Undertaking, and shall be glad if my Arguments appear weak because theirs are stronger; for I can do nothing against the Truth, but for the Truth.

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CHAPTER I.

*General Considerations concerning the
Inspiration of the Writings of the
New Testament.*

I Do not dislike our Author's
 * Division of the Scripture-
 Writings into *Prophecies, Histories* and *Doctrines*: and I do so
 far agree with him, as to grant that
 all the Holy Books have not an equal degree of Inspiration, but have more or less of it, according as the matters they contain are more or less Adequate to the Writers Understanding and Capacities. For I cannot but think that God made use of their Natural Talents as far as they could be subservient to his designs, the Reasons of which Opinion I shall have occasion hereafter to mention. But yet, notwithstanding my agreement with him thus far, I must desire leave not to follow his Method, because

a French
Edit.

p. 222.
English.

p. 13

I think 'twill contribute much to the Clearness and Strength of the following Discourse, if I treat of the Inspiration of the *New-Testament-Writings* in *General*, in the first place. For in this Method we begin with what is most Known and Certain, and from thence proceed to explain what is more Doubtful and Obscure. And if the Divine Authority of the Writings of the New Testament be once proved, that of the Old must follow as a necessary Consequence; because the former gives Testimony to the latter, and most of the Arguments which prove the one, may be easily applied to the other.

Mr. N. allows the *Histories of the N. Testament to be exact and true Relations of the matter of Fact, but supposes that there's no need of Inspiration to Write a true History*^b. He grants likewise that the *Apostolical Epistles contain nothing but what is conformable to the Doctrine of Christ; but yet that the Apostles had no need of an extraordinary Inspiration for Writing their Epistles*^c. But all this while he takes no notice

^b Fr. p.
231, &c.
Engl. p.
28. &c.

^c Fr. p.
282, 283.
Eng. p.
112, 113.

tice that these Writings were design'd by God for the Perpetual Use and Instruction of the Church, and to be a Rule of Christian Faith to all Ages. Which one thing if it be made out, will prove their Divine Original, and sufficiently distinguish them from all other Writings, purely Humane, where Providence cannot be supposed to have had such an extraordinary Hand in the Composure: since it neither can be pretended that the Authors were the *Immediate Instruments* of God in publishing his Will, nor that their Works were design'd for so general a Use, as the Instruction of the Universal Church.

I shall therefore in the first place give a definition of an *Inspir'd Writing*, and then prove that the Writings of the New Testament are truly such. *An Inspired Writing I take to be a Book that is writ by the Incitation, Direction and Assistance of God, and design'd by him for the Perpetual use of the Church.*

The Proof of the Inspiration of the *New-Testament-Writings*, I shall

comprise in these following Propositions.

- I. *God design'd to provide a means for the preserving the Doctrine of Christ to the end of the World.*
- II. *This could not be done so well in any Ordinary way or Humane means, as by committing this Doctrine to Writing.*
- III. *'Tis more reasonable to suppose that God would make use of this way than any other, because he made use of the same means before, for the Instruction of the Jewish Church.*
- IV. *He has actually made use of no other way for the conveying down the Christian Doctrine, that can be assign'd.*
- V. *The Apostles themselves design'd their Writings for the Perpetual use of the Church, and lookt upon them of equal Authority in the Christian Church, as the Writings of the Old Testament were in the Jewish.*
- VI. *The Age immediately after the Apostles lookt upon the Writings of the New Testament, as the standing Rule of Faith to the Christian Church.*

I think

I think the making out these Propositions, (some of which need very little proof) will fully prove the Divine Authority of the Books contain'd in the Canon of the New Testament: and when they are made out, such Consequences may be drawn from them, as will silence most of the Cavils and Objections, which the *Author of these Letters* and some others have rais'd against the Inspiration of the Scripture.

I. The first Proposition to be proved is this: *God design'd to provide a means for the preserving the Doctrine of Christ, to the end of the World.*

This Proposition I think any Christian will take for granted: and my design at present is not to dispute with *Infidels*, but to lay down those Principles upon which the Divine Authority of the Scriptures is built, the truth of Christianity being presupposed: because the Author I am to deal with professes the Belief of Christianity, and yet has rais'd Objections against a great many of those Wri-

Mat. 23.
10 --16.
18.

tings, which Christians have all a-long lookt upon to be of Divine Authority. I say therefore that no Christian can doubt of the truth of this Proposition: for every Christian believes the Gospel to be the last and most perfect Revelation of the Will of God which he intends to afford to the World: he believes that *Christ will be with his Church to the end of the World, and that the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it*: i. e. it shall never be so far weakned, as that the Profession of Christianity should cease, or the Church be perfectly deprived of the Knowledge of saving Truth. Nothing further being needful for the illustrating this Proposition, I proceed to the

II. Proposition. *God could not preserve the Knowledge of Christianity in an Ordinary way, or by any Humane means so well, as by conveying the Doctrine of it to after Ages by Writing.*

I do not pretend to prescribe to God Almighty what method he shall use to discover his Will to the World, or confine him to any one way

way of doing it: but thus much I think I may safely say, that a *standing Rule of Faith* committed to Writing is liable to less inconveniencies and difficulties, than any other way of conveying down Divine Truth. Whereas all other ways that can be assign'd of transmitting Divine Revelation are incumbred with so many difficulties, that without a constant series of Miracles, they can never attain their end. And therefore we can't reasonably suppose that God will make choice of any such methods to Reveal his Will by. For this is to be laid down for a certain truth, that *God never works more Miracles than needs must*, nor ever suspends or overbears the force of natural Agents without evident necessity, but always uses second Causes and Humane means as far as they will go. And therefore that method which offers least violence to Nature, is more likely to be made choice of by God. Some Men indeed are apt to think that the Hand of God can't shew it self without a constant

series of Miracles: but they that consider things more exactly, rather judge that a continued succession of Miracles would really be a reproach to God's Ordinary Providence: for often to interrupt the course of Nature, must needs be a reflection upon the Wisdom that first contrived it. We can imagine but two ways of God's Communicating his Will to several successive Ages without the help of Writing; either *Oral Tradition*, or making a *Particular Revelation* to every single Person, or at least to all those whose business 'tis to teach and instruct others in their Duty. Now both these ways are liable to such difficulties, and do suppose so many immediate interpositions of God's Power to prevent those errors which must of necessity attend them, (considering the present state of Humane Nature) as are not suitable to the methods which God uses in Governing the World. I shall not pursue this matter any further, nor give a particular account of the inconveniencies to
which

which both these Methods are obnoxious, and to correct which a constant Interposition of Miracles will be necessary. The Absurdity of the former has bin abundantly demonstrated by the ^e Learned Defenders of the *Protestant Resolution of Faith*, against those Popish Writers that set up Tradition in Opposition to it: and the Absurdity of the latter is evident at first sight, and none but meer Enthusiasts ever made any Pretence to it. But on the other side, for God to communicate his Will by Writing, implies nothing in it but what is Natural and Easie: there is nothing requisite to continue this to Posterity, but God's preserving the Writings themselves by the ordinary Methods of Providence: and then men may as well learn his Will from thence, as they can know the *Histories* of former Ages, the *Opinions* of *Philosophers*, the *Laws* of their own and other Countries, from the Writings which record each of these particulars: unless we will say, that God cannot order a Book

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e Dr. Til-
lotson's
Rule of
Faith.
Dr. Stil-
lingfl.
Defence
of A. B.
Laud.
Dr. Sher-
locks Pro-
testant
Resolu-
tion of
Faith.

to be writ in as Intelligible a manner, as men can indite it when they are left to themselves.

But 'twill further appear that 'tis more reasonable to suppose that God should preserve the Knowledge of Christianity by appointing a written Rule of Faith, than by any other means, if we consider,

III. *That he made use of the same means formerly for the Instruction of the Jewish Church.*

With God is no *variableness*, and what he once approves of, he does not afterward lay aside, but upon some great reason. Moses wrote his *Law in a book* by God's direction^e: the Prophets appeal to the *Law and to the Testimony*^f, as the only safe Guide, and by which men must judge whether a Doctrine come from God, or not. Our Saviour bids the Jews^g *search the Scriptures, for in them they were perswaded*, and so far they were in the right, *was contain'd the way to Eternal Life*: and in all his Contests with the Jews, he desired no other Vouchers for the Truth of what he said but *Moses* and

^e Exod.
34. 27.

^f Is. 8. 20.

^g Joh. 5.
39.

and the *Prophets*. And 'twill appear very reasonable to believe that God should use the same Method to instruct the Christian Church which he did the Jewish, if we consider that our Saviour and his Apostles conform'd the *External* parts of their Religion, to the Customs received among the Jews as much as they could, being resolv'd to give no offence by studiously affecting Novelties. The Two *Sacraments* were taken from Jewish Rites: the *Government* of the Christian Church was framed after the Pattern of the Jewish *Hierarchy*: the Apostles, as 'tis natural for all men to do, being willing to retain the Customs they had been bred up in, wherever the Nature of Christianity did not oblige them to the contrary. From whence 'tis natural to suppose that the Apostles should take care before they left the world, to provide some certain means of Instruction for the Christian Church, in Conformity to the Jewish, which might supply their place when they were dead and gone: or else they would
not

h Dent.
31. 9, 26.

not have been so faithful in their office as *Moses* was, *who delivered the Book of the Law to the Priests before his Decease*^h. And 'tis likely the Christians themselves would expect to be provided with as good and sufficient means of knowing their duty, as the Jews enjoyed, or else they would have had just cause to complain that they came behind them in the Advantages of Knowledge and Instruction. And that this is not a meer Conjecture, but the real Sense of the first Christians, is plain from the Account which the Ancient Writers give us of the occasion of St. *Matthew* and S. *Mark's* writing their Gospels. *Eusebius* tells us, ⁱ that St. *Matthew* wrote his Gospel particularly for the use of the Jews to whom he had preached, because going into other parts he would supply the Want of his Presence by Writing. *Clemens Alexandrinus* saies, ^k That St. *Mark* wrote his Gospel at the Request of the Christians at Rome, who were not satisfied with an unwritten Tradition of the Word, and therefore desir'd him to commit it to Writing. Which St. Peter

i H. E. 1.
3. c. 24.

k Ap. Euf.
H. E. 1. 2.
c. 15.

Peter coming to understand, approved and confirmed this Gospel for the use of the Church. And when these and the other Apostolical Writings came into the hands of Christians, there was no need of a particular Command from God to make them be received as the Rule of the Christian Faith. For the Character of the Persons who wrote them, the Example of the Jewish Church, and the Parity of Reason why these Writings should be of equal Authority among Christians, as the Writings of the Old Testament were among the Jews: and lastly the Necessity of having some Standing and Settled Rule of Faith: these were all sufficient Inducements to Christians to look upon the Apostolical Writings as ordained by God, for the Perpetual Use and Instruction of the Church. And this will further appear if we consider,

IV. *That God has actually made use of no other way for the conveying down the Doctrine of Christianity, that*
can

can be assign'd, but the Writings of the N. Testament.

'Tis a very weak Argument to infer that things must be so, because we think it Convenient they should be so. This is indeed to prescribe to God Almighty, and tell him he ought to have ask'd our Advice in the Managing of things. And therefore, tho the Arguments for the Infallibility of *Tradition*, for an *Infallible Judge of Controversies*, or whatever other Guide men have set up in opposition to the Scriptures, were never so plausible, and were as real Demonstrations as the Authors of them fancy them to be, yet as long as 'tis plain by Experience that *Tradition* is not *Infallible*, and that there is no *Infallible Judge of Controversies*, all these Pretences to Demonstration signify nothing, for a man may demonstrate his heart out, before he will be able to confute Experience. And that neither the Authority of the Church *Representative*, nor the Tradition of the Church *Diffusive*, neither Pope nor Council, jointly or separately, are Infallible Guides
to

to Christians, or equivalent to the Scriptures, has been made out with such admirable Clearness, and unanswerable Strength of Reason, by the Learned Defenders of the *Protestant* Cause against *Popery*, that without further insisting upon this Point, I shall refer to them for further Satisfaction, and proceed to the

V. Proposition. *That the Apostles themselves design'd their Writings for the Perpetual Use of the Church, and look'd upon them of Equal Authority with the Writings of the Old Testament.*

The Supernatural Assistance which attended the Apostles in every thing of Moment, and tending to the Edification of the Church, was so Extraordinary: and even their Private Judgment as men, was so Upright and void of all Self-interest and Corruption, that 'twill very much illustrate this matter, to consider what Judgment and Opinion they themselves had of their own Writings.

The very Design of the Gospels
shews

shews that they were writ for the *General Use* of the Church, to Record the Doctrine and Miracles of our Saviour, *the Author and Finisher of our Faith*, whom all are to hear and obey. And tho it were some particular *Emergency* that might induce the Evangelists to set about this Work, which yet is to be look'd upon as a *Providential Motion*, yet the Gospels themselves not only answer that particular End which was the first Occasion of their being writ, but are of General Use, and fitted to all Ages and times. We have already mention'd the Occasion of St. *Matthew* and St. *Mark's* writing their Gospels. St.

Luk. 1. 1. *Luke* gives an ¹ Account of his Undertaking himself, the substance of which is, "That since many had
 "written an History of our Savior's
 "Life and Actions, who wanted
 "some Advantages of knowing the
 "Particulars which he had, he himself being exactly inform'd by
 "those who were Eye-witnesses and
 "Parties concern'd, set about a more
 "accurate account of these Matters,
 to

“to the end that every Christian
 “who will be at the pains to read it,
 “might know the Certainty of
 “those things wherein he has been
 “instructed. It seems from hence
 that committing things to Writing,
 was in St. *Lukes* judgment the most
 certain means of Conveying the
 Knowledge of them to others.

As for St. *John*, 'tis plain by com-
 paring his Gospel with the other
Three, that he had seen the Rest and
 approved them, ^a and therefore
 supplied what he thought fit, which ^{a V. Evf.}
 the former Evangelists had omit- ^{H. E. l. 2.}
 ted: that so all of them together ^{C. 24.}
 might be a *Complete Account* of all
 that Jesus did and taught. And he
~~he~~ himself tells us that his Design
 in writing his Gospel was, ^b *That* ^{b Joh. 20.}
men might believe that Jesus is Christ, ^{31.}
and that believing they might have life
thro' his Name.

To proceed to the *Epistles* of the
 Apostles: it must be confess'd that
 many of St. *Paul's* were written up-
 on the particular *Exigencies* of the
 Churches to which they are dire-
 cted, and were occasion'd by some

Disputes that were proper to those times: which may be thought an Argument that they were not design'd for the General Use of the Church. But yet if we consider that the Fundamental Doctrines of Christianity are admirably illustrated by them, and many of the more Mysterious parts of the Gospel-Dispensation more fully treated of in them, than by Christ himself, because there were many things which the Apostles were not able to *bear* ^c while he was with them, and therefore they were referred to the Teaching of the Holy Ghost, for fuller Instruction in such matters: I say if we lay these things together, we must acknowledge it necessary to add the Apostolical Epistles to the Gospels, in order to the making up a *Complete Rule* of Christian Faith: or else we shall be much to seek for an *Authentick* Explication of several Important Points of Christianity. But of this I shall discourse more largely in the next Chapter. To return to S. Paul's Epistles: I cannot but observe
how

c Joh. 16.
12.

how the Wisdom of God has made St. Paul's Style and way of Writing, to be admirably serviceable to the Edification of the Church, which yet if we examine it by the Rules of *Criticism*, is far from being *Regular* and *Exact*. But his free use of *Digressions*, and those long ones too sometimes, opens him a way into a larger Subject and of more General Use, and does not suffer him to confine himself to that one particular Point, which 'twas his main Design to treat of. And when we find him take occasion from every hint to explain the Mysteries of the Gospel, to set forth the Excellency of it, and to perswade men to live up to the Height of its Precepts, this is not only a sign that his holy Soul was full of this noble Subject, but is likewise an argument that the Holy Spirit Influenc'd his Pen, and made him enlarge himself upon those Points which were of Universal Concern, and would be for the Perpetual Benefit of the Church in all succeeding Ages. A signal In-

stance of this you may see in that large *Digression* in the *second Epistle to the Corinthians*, which reaches from the 13. *verse* of the *Second Chapter*, to the 5. *verse* of the *Seventh*. Where he discourses of some of the Fundamentals of Christianity, with such a true Spirit of Piety, and with such a powerful Force of Natural Eloquence, that if we may prefer one part of that Inspir'd Teacher's Writings before another, we might call this one of the most Elevated Discourses in all *St. Paul's* Epistles. And as both the Matter of his Epistles, and the Manner how they are writ, discover to us that they were design'd for the Perpetual Use of Christians, so we shall find *St. Peter* to have been of the same mind, whose words justify all that I have said. For he places *St. Paul's* Epistles in an equal Rank with those holy Writings, which were on all hands agreed upon to be the Word of God. Thus much his words import, *II. Pet. 3. 15, 16.* where speaking of *St. Paul's* Epistles that there were some things
in

in them *hard to be understood, which ignorant and unstable men wrested and applied to ill purposes, to establish corrupt Doctrines: he adds, As they do also the OTHER SCRIPTURES to their own destruction:* which Expression of [*other Scriptures*] plainly implies that St. Peter look'd upon St. Paul's Epistles as part of the *Canon* of Scripture, and rank'd them among those Divine Writings which were design'd for our Edification and Instruction in Righteousness, and which 'twas dangerous to pervert to a contrary Purpose.

And if St. Paul's Epistles, which were writ upon the Exigencies and with Regard to the State of Particular Churches, were yet still design'd to be of general Use; the same may be said with much greater reason concerning the *Epistles* of the rest of the Apostles, with aim only at this General Design, to confirm those in the Faith to whom they were directed, *to exhort and testify that this is the true Grace of God wherein they stood*^d, and to keep up the Re-

^d 1 Pet 5.

12.

membrance of the Apostles Doctrine after their decease^e, as St. Peter speaks concerning the Intent of his two Epistles. And we find St. John addresses himself to all Christians, without Restriction, and even to all Ranks and Degrees of them, whom he divides into *Children*, *Young men*, and *Fathers*^t.

f 1 Joh. 2.
12, 13.

Thus much I think sufficient to prove that the Apostles themselves design'd their Writings for the Perpetual Use of the Church, and look'd upon them as of Equal Authority with the Inspir'd Books of the Old Testament. I proceed to the

VI. and last Proposition, *viz.* *The Age immediately following that of the Apostles, look'd upon their Writings as the Standing Rule of Faith to the Christian Church.*

Certainly next to the Apostles themselves, the Age immediately following was best able to know what the Apostles thought of their own Writings, and what Authority they challeng'd as due to them. *Irenaeus*, one of the
Greatest

Greatest men of the Church in that Age, sufficiently shews the Sense of the Christians of his own time concerning the Authority of these Writings. The *Hereticks* against whom he writes, pretended that their Opinions came originally from the Apostles, and that, whatever the Apostles might say to the contrary in their Writings, yet they taught those very things by word of mouth, which these Hereticks since maintain'd. In answer to this, *Irenæus* does not only confute their Pretences, by shewing that there was Clear and Undoubted Tradition for the Catholick Faith, which in those early Times could easily be trac'd up to the very Apostles^g: but likewise proves that 'tis in vain to set up *Oral Tradition* in Opposition to the Writings of the Apostles,^h because the very same Gospel which they at first preach'd, they afterwards by the Will of God committed to Writing, to be the Foundation and Pillar of our Faith. In pursuance of which Testimony we may further observe,

^g *Iren.*
l. 3. c. 3.

^h *Ibid.* l.
3. c. 1.

that the very Arts which those Hereticks used either to Undermine, or Evade the Authority of the Apostolical Writings, plainly shew their Authority was look'd upon as Sacred and Decisive in the Christian Church.

Differt.
in Irenae-
um l. n.
40, 41.

The Writers of the same Age do fully bear witness to the Canon of the New Testament. The Learned Mr. *Dodwell* has observ'd that St. *Paul's Epistles* were generally known and received in the Church soonest of any of the New Testament Writings: and accordingly, besides the Testimony which St. *Peter* gives them, which we have already mention'd, we we may observe, that *Ignatius* the earliest Writer of the *second Age*, is very industrious in imitating St. *Paul's* Style, and using his Expressions, as if he had a mind his Readers should take notice that he had studied his Epistles. The Authority indeed of the *Epistle to the Hebrews* hath been call'd in question, because the Author's not having set his Name to
it

it, has given occasion to doubt whether it were *S. Paul's* or not. But as this Epistle must be of Apostolical Authority, being older than *Clemens Romanus*, who plainly alludes to it in two places of his *Epistle to the Corinthians*^k; so the style, ^{4 N. 17,} the way of *Arguing*, and the *Genius* of ^{& 36.} the work discover it to be *S. Paul's*: but *S. Peter* puts an end to the dispute; for the saying which he quotes in his second Epistle as *S. Paul's*, is certainly taken out of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*^l. The first ^{12 Pet.} Epistle of *S. Peter* is quoted by *S.* ^{3. 15.} *Polycarp*, who writ just after *Ignatius's* death. About the same time ^{compar'd with} certain Pious Men Travell'd from ^{Hebr. 10.} place to place, on purpose to communicate the *Writings of the Gospels*, as *Eusebius* informs us^m: which he ^{37.} to be sure understood of the *Four Gospels* now extant, which only were reckon'd Authentick in his time. And 'tis plain they were esteem'd so in the *Middle of the Second Age*, because *Justin Martyr* quotes them generally, whenever he has occasion to mention any thing belonging

ἡ τὰ ἑνὶ
τῶν Εὐ-
αγγελίων
παρεχόμε-
να ἡμετέροις.
H. E. l. 3.
c. 37.

ing to the History of our Saviour. But in *Irenæus's* time their Authority was settled beyond all dispute: for he says positively, ⁿ *that there*

ⁿ *Iren.*

l. 3. c. 11. *are Four Gospels, neither more nor less.*

And indeed the Authenticalness of Four Gospels seems to be owing to *St. John* himself, who made them into one Complete *Code*, as I ob-

^o p. 11. 12.

served before. ^o The same *Irenæus* gives a large Testimony to the *Revelations*, and often quotes the *first*

p ap. *Eu-*

seb. H. E.

l. 3. c. 18.

& l. 5. c. 8.

Epistle of S. John ^p.

I thought it not improper to give this brief Account of the Testimonies which are given by the earliest Christian Writers, to the most considerable Books of the New Testament, to shew how good a Foundation there is for the Authority of the *New-Testament Canon*: and how little ground there is for *Mr. Hobbs's* Insinuation to the contrary, who tell us,

^q *Levia-*

than part

3. c. 33.

^q *that the Writings of the Apostles were not received nor acknowledged as such by the Church, till the Council of Laodicea, which was held in the Year 364. recommended them to Christians.* As if all Christians did not agree in ac-

know-

knowledging such particular Books for the Writings of the Apostles, till they were *Recommended to them*, as he speaks, and Enumerated by a Council. Which has as little truth in it, as what he says just afterward, that at the time of this Council, *all the Copies of the New Testament were in the hands of Ecclesiasticks*, which if it be not a downright and wilful falsity in him, is such a piece of ignorance, as a grosser cannot be found in all the *Kingdom of Darknes* which he has described. I find Men generally agree in believing Mr. *Hobbs* to be the Author of the *Leviathan* and several other ill Books, and I fear too many have a great deference for their Authority, tho the *Parliament* (which according to him hath a juster right to declare what Books or Doctrines are to be received, than a *Council*) hath not yet given us a Catalogue of his Writings or *Recommended* them to the World: neither of which could be true, if this Argument of his be good. But to return; I don't pretend to have
 Collected

Collected all that can be alledged to prove the Antiquity of the New-Testament-Canon, nor will I go farther upon a Subject that is already undertaken by that *Learned Person* who will shortly Publish an Elaborate *Collection* of all the *Various Readings* of the New Testament, from whom the World may expect full satisfaction as to this matter.

Fr. p.
266. Eng.
p. 85.

However I can't but just take notice, that 'tis no prejudice to the Divine Authority of the N. Testament, as our Author intimates^a, that some Books are received into it whose Authors are not certainly known, and therefore, as he argues, of whose Inspiration we can't be certain. He instances in the *Epistle to the Hebrews*. But there is sufficient proof that *S. Paul* was the Author of that Epistle, as I have shewed already. And as to the whole New-Testament Canon, 'twas certainly the design of those that Compiled it, only to gather together the Writings of the Apostles, or of such as writ by their direction, as the
Ancients

Ancients tell us *S. Mark* did by *S. Peter's*^b, & *S. Luke* by *S. Paul's*^c. So that the only reason why some Books were doubted of, was because it did not clearly appear whether they were Writ by Apostles or not, and as soon as that point was cleared, their Authority was immediately Establish'd. And so much for the proving the *Sixth Proposition*.

And I think supposing these Six Propositions proved, this Conclusion will plainly follow from what has been said, that the Books of the New-Testament were Written by God's Direction, and design'd by Him for the Perpetual use and Instruction of the Church, and are the only Fixt Rule which he has appointed for this purpose.

I shall draw some Conclusions from these Premises, which will tend to illustrate and explain the Divine Inspiration of the Holy Writings.

1. *It follows from hence that the Holy Ghost assisted the Apostles as fully when they Writ, as when they Preached.* How far this assistance extended, and

b Clem.

Alex. ap.

Eus. H. E.

l. 2. c. 15.

c Iren ap.

eund. l. 5.

c. 8.

Grot.

in Luc.

21. 34. &c

1 Cor. 11.

23, 24, 25.

compar'd

with

Luk. 22.

19, 20.

and wherein it consisted, I shall examine particularly in the next Chapter: at present I intend only to shew that we may presume there is as great a degree of Inspiration to be found in their Writings, as was in their Preaching. For since the reason why this Assistance accompanied them in their Preaching, was the benefit of the Church, that they might *Guide it into all Truth*, without any danger of mixing error with it: the same reason holds much stronger for their Writings, which do not serve for the Instruction of One Age only, as their Preaching did, but of Many. And therefore tho we should suppose that they use Arguments *ad Hominem* sometimes, and proceed upon such *Principles* as were generally admitted in the Age they lived, without nicely examining whether they were true or not; yet this only shews that they thought fit to explain Divine Truths in such a manner as was most suitable to the *Capacity* of the persons they were immediately to Instruct. And

as we must grant that tho the New Testament was design'd for the use of future Ages, yet the Phrase and Style and Argumentation used in it is wholly accommodated to the Sentiments and Usage of that Age in which 'twas writ: so S. Paul himself does plainly imply that he does not always use the *Best* Arguments, but sometimes such as are best fitted to the Capacities and Notions of those he Writes to. For thus we find him express himself by way of excuse for the Argument he makes use of, *I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh*: which is as much as if he had said, I could bring a better argument to prove what I say, but this which I make use of is more suitable to your Capacities, and may perhaps more effectually convince you, than a better.

2. It follows secondly, that *since the Books of the New Testament*, (and the same reason holds as to any other Writings of the same rank and use) *were design'd to be a standing rule of Faith to Christians, the Holy Ghost,*
tho

d Rom.
6. 19.

tho he did not generally Dictate the words which the holy Writers used, yet directed them to express their minds in such a manner, that those who have a regard to the Dialect and way of speaking in which they write, might rightly understand them; or at least the Holy Spirit prevented their giving just occasion for Men's errors and mistakes in matters of Consequence, by their Phrases and Expressions. And such a degree of assistance is absolutely necessary to make these Books a *standing Rule of Faith*. For tho we suppose the Holy Writers used a *Popular* style, and consequently made use of such *Hyperboles* and *Metaphors* and other *Improprieties of Speech*, which common practise allows of in all Languages, (especially where they occasionally speak of *Philosophical* matters, and things not immediately relating to Religion :) yet unless we suppose them to speak properly in those *Terms of Art* which are of fundamental use in the explaining the *Doctrines of Christianity*, and upon the sense of which whole *Controversies* turn, and as they are differently

differently taken they alter the very face of the Christian Religion; I say, except we suppose the Apostles to speak properly, *i. e.* agreeably to their own Simplicity and Plainness of Speech, and in such a manner as was most likely to be understood by those they writ to, when they treat of matters of great Importance, and such as are justly to be reckon'd *Fundamental* Doctrines, the New Testament will not answer the ends of a Rule of Faith. For a Book is of no use to explain or decide any Controversy, if we can have no fixt rule whereby to judge of its style, so as to be in some measure certain what is its true sense. And 'tis very strange if a Book writ by persons who had an extraordinary assistance from God, and which was design'd for Universal use, should not be worded with that care which Humane Industry uses in matters of Importance. And therefore we have reason to rely upon the assistance of the Holy Spirit, even with relation to the *Phrase* and *Let-*

ter of the Scripture, and to believe that he has so far directed the holy Pen-men, that their Phrases and Expressions should not lead Men into error in *matters of Consequence*; but may be rightly understood by those that acquaint themselves with the Dialect in which they writ, and consult the Ages nearest the Apostles, who must needs be, next to their own style, the best Judges of their sense. If indeed the *Socinian* Doctrines concerning the *Nature* and *Satisfaction of Christ* were true, it must be confessed there would be little reason to believe that the Holy Ghost had a hand in wording the Scriptures: nay then the Scriptures will appear to be written in such a style, as if the Writers design'd to lead Men into error. And the *Socinians* themselves, when they make *Reason* the *sole Judge* of Scripture, and tell us they will not believe any thing contrary to Reason, tho it were never so plainly asserted in Scripture, do in effect confess that the expressions of Scripture, taken in their natural and
most

most obvious sense, do not at all
 favour their Opinions ^e. And <sup>e Socin.
 de Christ.
 Servat.
 l. 3. c. 6.</sup> therefore 'tis no wonder to find
 these Gentlemen warn their Read-
 ers so often not to make Inferences
 from the *Phrases* of Scripture, as
 if they were used strictly and prop-
 erly: that they so often tell us
 of the Improprieties and Meta-
 phors which the *Eastern Writers*,
 and those who imitate them, a-
 bound with: that the Apostles *play*
with Words as Socinus with Reve-
 rence speaks ^f, and take them some-
 times in one sense and sometimes
 in another. Our Author follows
 them in this, as well as in some o-
 ther things ^g, and often cautions
^h us "not to subtilize about the expres-
 "sions, nor stick too close to the Letter
 "of the Scripture, since the style of
 "Scripture is so far from being exact,
 "that 'tis very careless: and tells us,
 "that laying too great stress upon
 "Words, has bin the occasion of most
 "of the Disputes among Christians. I
 readily grant it has; but then the
 fault has bin that Men have either
 Interpreted Scripture-Expressions

^f Ama-
 vit Pau-
 lus in Ex-
 ecrationis
 verbo esse
 argutus
 Socin. de
 Chr. Serv.
 l. 2. c. 1.
^g v Fr. p.
 234. Eng.
 p. 146.
^h Eng. p.
 107, 111.
 Fr. p.
 280, 281.
 Eng. p. 117.
 Fr. p. 285.
 Eng. p.
 145, 146.
 Fr. p. 232,
 234.
 i Eng. p.
 107, 116.
 Fr. p. 280,
 285.

by notions of *Philosophy*, which the Holy Writers never heard of, or else they have not inquir'd into the Sentiments of those times in which these Books were writ, but have judged of their sense by the *Schemes*, and applied them to the *Disputes* of *Modern* Ages, as if they were writ only with a regard to the Controversies that should arise in *After-Times*, without any respect to the Sentiments and Exigencies of the Age wherein they were written. But if we have a regard only to the Geni^{us} of the Language which the Holy Writers uscd, and judge of their Sentiments by the State of the Church in their time, and by such Ancient Authors as were most likely to be acquainted with the Notions which were then generally received; I don't think laying stress upon the Phrases of the Scriptures can lead us into such gross errors as Mr. N. imagines^k. And without supposing this, we can scarce deduce any Inferences from Scripture Texts, and yet this is practis'd by the Apostles themselves, who some-
times

* Eng. p.

146.

Fr p. 234.

times argue from Words, and those too taken in their nicest signification. A remarkable example of which is that Inference of S. Paul's,

To Abraham and to his seed were the Promises made: he saith not, And to seeds, as of many, but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. 1 Gal. 3. 16.

3. Since God in his Providence took care that these Books should be Writ for the use of his Church, and therefore gave Providential occasions for their being Written, it follows that they are Compos'd in such a manner as not to exclude the use of the Natural Reason and Meditation of the Writers who Compos'd them.

Works of Providence are not suppos'd to exclude Humane means, and we believe many things to be brought to pass by the determinate Counsel and Power of God, tho they are not purely Miraculous and meerly God's own Act and Deed, but are brought to pass by second Causes as his Instruments. And why then can't he give Men a Rule of Faith and Manners, except the Writing be with the im-

mediate Finger of God, as the *Two Tables* were? 'Tis certain that the ordinary Operations of the Spirit do only excite and assist our natural Faculties, not supersede or render them useless. And even the extraordinary ones do very often influence Men's minds after the same manner, as appears by *S. Paul's* advice to *Timothy*, ^m Give attendance to Reading, to Exhortation, to Doctrine, neglect not the gift which is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy. And to the same purpose he speaks in the second Epistle ⁿ. And therefore tho we suppose the Authors of the Scriptures to have been Inspir'd, and to have had the extraordinary Assistances of God's Spirit, yet this will not exclude the use of their Natural Talents, but that the Writers made use of them as far as they could be serviceable to their purpose, and God supplied their defects. From hence appears the weakness of that Argument which is urged by our Author and by some others, against the Inspiration of the *Poetical Books*

m 1 Tim.
4. 14.

n 2 Tim.
1. 6.

Books ° of the Old Testament, *because they seem to be the effects of Study and Meditation:* and against that of the Historical Books of the Scripture, ° because the things contain'd *in them are either of the Writers own Knowledge, or else taken from Ancient Memoirs, or the Relation of others.* To the same purpose 'tis urged against the Divine Authority of S. Paul's Epistles by Spinoza, ° that *they are full of Argumentation,* which he thinks must be the effect of S. Paul's own reason. As if a Man that had a perfect Systeme of the Christian Religion infused into his mind by Revelation, as we suppose S. Paul to have had, did not apprehend it after a Rational manner, and see the whole Series and Chain of its Principles, by the help of which he could infer one thing from another. But is it not a pleasant Argument against the Inspiration of a Book, that it is writ in a Rational and Argumentative way? which must either suppose that 'tis below God Almighty to give a reason for his Institutions: or else

° Fr. p.
230. En.
p. 27.

p Grot.
votum
pro pace,
p. 672.
Refutat.
Apologet.
p. 722.

q Theol.
Polit.
C. 11.

that 'twas not proper for the Apostles, to shew their *Disciples* that the Doctrines they taught them were such as might be Rationally deduc'd from certain Principles, and to confute their *Adversaries* the same way, who would not submit to their bare Authority, nor believe a thing to be true, meerly because they said so.

4. *It follows from what has bin said, that 'tis no Argument against a Book's being design'd by God for the perpetual use of the Church, that 'twas at first writ upon some particular Exigency, and with relation to the peculiar Circumstances of the persons to whom 'tis directed.*

For some of those Books of the Old Testament which were certainly design'd for the publick benefit of the Church, as 'tis granted by all that acknowledge any such thing as Inspiration, (and I don't at present concern my self with any others) I say some of the Undoubtedly Inspir'd Writings were occasion'd by the particular Exigences of those times in which their Authors lived.

lived. I mean the Books of the *Prophets*, who were all sent by God to testify against the sins which were committed in their own times. And if God so order'd it, that these Prophecies should be of perpetual use to the Church, why may not the other *Occasional* Writings of the Scripture, if I may so term them, have been compos'd with the same Design? I have already shew'd^r that the manner of St. *Paul's* Writing does excellently answer this Intent. From hence it appears that the Argument used by some *Papish* Writers why the New Testament cannot be a perfect Rule of the Christian Faith, because several parts of it were writ only with Relation to particular Exigencies of some one Church, holds as well against the Old Testament being a Rule to the Jews, because a great part of of it, *viz.* the Prophecies, were occasion'd by the particular Circumstances of those Times in which the Prophets lived.

r P. 19.

C H A P. II.

A more particular Inquiry into the nature of the Apostolical Gifts and Inspiration.

HAVING said thus much in general concerning the Divine Authority and Inspiration of the Apostolical Writings, I proceed to examine more distinctly the Assertions which the *Author of the Letters* hath laid down concerning the Inspiration of the Apostles and of their Writings : and in order to that shall consider particularly, both as to their Nature and Extent, some of the most remarkable *Gifts*, with which the Holy Spirit indowed the Apostles. I find our Author is very industrious to lessen the Apostolical Gifts, as much as he can, and to represent them very little above their natural Faculties. He indeavours to shew, "*That the Operation of the Holy Spirit upon their Minds,*
con-

“ consisted chiefly in refreshing their
 “ Memories, ^a and bringing to their ^a Fr. p.
 “ Remembrance what Christ had said ^{254, 257.}
 “ unto them. He does indeed say, ^{En. p. 66.}
 “ That sometimes the Holy Spirit ^{70.}
 “ made them understand by extraor- ^b Fr. 255.
 “ dinary Revelations, that which Christ ^{En. p. 67.}
 “ had said unto them whilst he was with
 “ them, but which they then understood
 “ not. And that they had many imme-
 “ diate Revelations and divers heaven-
 “ ly Visions ^c. And in another place, ^c Fr. p.
 “ That perhaps the Spirit open’d their ^{252. Eng.}
 “ Minds after a manner we compre- ^{62.}
 “ hend not. But while he sets out the ^d Fr. 257.
 Objections against the Inspiration ^{Eng. p.}
 of the Apostles in the best Light, and ^{70.}
 with the greatest Force he can, he
 passes over the Evidences for it very
 slightly, and looks upon their Imme-
 diate Inspirations to have been
 so extraordinary, and to have hap-
 pen’d so seldom, that he does not
 stick roundly to declare, ^e That their ^e Ubi sup.
 Infallibility consisted in relating faith-
 fully what they had seen and heard.
 He likewise endeavours to shew, ^f Fr. p.
 “ That they had not an extraordina- ^{240. &c.}
 ry Assistance, when they were sum- ^{Eng. p.}
 mon’d ^{42, &c.}

8 Fr. p.
248, 249.
259.
Eng. p.
57-74

mon'd before the Secular Powers, upon the account of their Religion. And he makethis another argument against the Inspiration of the Apostles, and other persons in those times whom the Scripture speaks of as inspir'd, & that they confer'd with one another, and submitted to one another's Judgments, and did not come to a Conclusion concerning any matter in question, till after long Deliberation, and Consultation with each other : with many other Cavils of less weight. In Answer to which, and for the Clearing of this Matter I shall shew,

- I. *How far we may allow what he says to be true, and in what Cases the Apostles did not speak or act by Inspiration.*
- II. *I shall shew that excepting those Cases, the Apostles writ and spake by the particular Assistance and Direction of the Spirit.*
- III. *I shall shew that the Assistance of the Holy Spirit did not consist only or chiefly in Improving their Natural Faculties, or Strengthening and Refreshing their Memories.*
- IV. *I shall shew that they had an*
ex-

extraordinary Assistance, when they were summon'd before Magistrates upon the Account of their Religion: and vindicate their Behaviour under those Circumstances, from the unbecoming Reflections which Mr. N. has made upon it.

V. I shall vindicate the Inspiration of the Apostles and other inspir'd persons from the rest of the Objections which he advances against it.

I. As to the first of these Inquiries, What were the Cases whercin the Apostles did not act or speak by Inspiration, I conceive we may allow them to be these following.

I. Where they treat of the common Occurrences of Life, and such things as have no Relation at all to Divine Truths. As when St. Paul speaks of his design to take Rome^h in his way to Spain, and to call atⁱ Corinth as he went into Macedonia: but yet it appears he was uncertain as to that Resolution,^k and did not actuallyⁱ make it good. Many Instances of the like nature might be alledg'd^m. Hitherto we may refer Slips of memory in matters of

^h Rom.

15. 24.

ⁱ 2 Cor.

1. 16.

^k v. 1 Cor.

16. 7.

ⁱ v. 2 Cor.

17.

^m v. 1 Cor.

1. 16. r.

Joh. 6. 19.

Act. 19. 7.

no

no consequence, some Examples of which there are to be found in the N. Testament ⁿ.

27. v. Mat.

27. 9. Act.

7. 16.

2. *Such things as were matters only of Humane Prudence, being of an Indifferent nature in themselves, and consequently not the proper Subjects of a Divine Revelation.* For matters of Prudence, *i.e.* Where God has given men no fix'd rule, but left them at liberty to determine for themselves according as their circumstances shall direct, as they are not the proper Subjects of a Divine Law, so neither are they of a Divine Revelation. Such is the Case of *married persons where one party is an Unbeliever*, which St. Paul considers, ^o and resolves by the Rules of humane Prudence, (and therefore tells us before hand, that 'tis *He* that speaks, *not the Lord*) taking his measures from the general Law of Christian Charity. For as to this Case I look upon Mr. *Thorn-dike's* ^p Opinion as the most probable, which is, That the Apostle look'd upon Marriage made by persons before they were Christians, to lay no stricter Obligation upon the

o 1 Cor.

7. 12.

^p Laws
of the
Church,
p. 117.

the Parties, than the Laws which they were under when the Marriage was contracted, design'd to lay upon them. So that if two persons who were under the Laws of the *Roman* Empire married, and afterward one of them turn'd Christian, this did not at all alter the Conditions of the Marriage, in respect of the Converted Party, from what they were before: nor in a Marriage contracted by Subjects of the *Roman* Empire, under the state of *Heathenism*, is the Converted Party by virtue of his imbracing Christianity afterward, oblig'd anew by the stricter Ties of the Christian Law concerning Marriage, but only by those which the *Roman* Laws required, upon which Terms the Marriage was made at first: and so might upon just occasion, take Advantage of the Privilege which the *Roman* Laws permitted, of being Divorc'd for other Causes besides that which was allowed by our Saviour. Now the reason why the Laws of Christianity do not extend to a Marriage contracted under a state of *Heathenism* I conceive to be

be this, because Heathen Marriages being not in their own nature Indissoluble, as Christian Marriages are, but the Parties having reserv'd to themselves a liberty to part from each other, in such Cases as the Laws of each Country allowed, the nature of the Marriage-contract still continues the same, after the Conversion of either Party which it did before, *i.e.* Dissoluble, unless the Believing Party can perswade the Unbelieving, to oblige himself to the Observation of those stricter Laws of Matrimony, which are injoin'd by Christ. Without which mutual Consent the Marriage continues the same it was before, while both Parties were Unbelievers: and consequently the Laws of Christ do not reach this Case, being applicable only to those Marriages which are made in the Christian Church, or at least which are made Christian by an After-act, and mutual Consent of the Parties to submit to the Christian Law in this particular. This Opinion seems to be countenanc'd by the Apostle in the 15. verse of that Chapter. ^a *If the Un-*

ἡ ἡ δὲ δὲ δὲ
 λατρεῖ.
 V. ver. 39
 & Rom.
 7. 1, 2, 3.

7 April 2.
init.

α Τὸ κρηδίσ-
ματος πατρὸς
ἐκείνου Περὶ
ἐκείνου. Ibid.

^b *Antiq.*
l. 15. c. 9 p.
532. B.

when they all proved ineffectual, sent him a Divorce drawn up according to the form prescribed by the *Roman Laws* ^a. This action of hers is commended by *Justin Martyr*; which I suppose he would not have done, if he had thought the Laws of the Gospel took place in such a Marriage as this, which was contracted in a state of Heathenism. For certainly Christianity does not allow the Wife to put away her Husband upon any account whatsoever: since that was never allowed by *Moses's Law*, nor ever practis'd among the *Jews* till *Herod's* time, when *Salome* sent a Bill of Divorce to her Husband, which was done contrary to the *Jewish* Laws, as *Josephus* ^b, who relates it, observes. And if this be the true state of the case concerning Marriage, where one party is a Convert to Christianity, and the true ground of *S. Paul's* resolving the question proposed to him concerning this matter; the reason is plain why he introduces his answer with this Preface, *I, not the Lord* ^c,

Lord^e; for this case is of the same ^{c 1 Cor.}
 nature with the other Indifferent ^{7. 12.}
 things *S. Paul* discourses of in the
 same Chapter, where he gives his
 judgement about the state of Vir-
 ginity and Widowhood. The
 doubts concerning which matters
 he resolves by the Rules of Pru-
 dence, and with respect to the *pre-*
sent Distress^d, and the difficulties ^{d 1 Cor.}
 which attended the Profession of ^{7. 26.}
 Christianity. The Apostle indeed
 says, *I give my Opinion* about these
 questions, *as one that hath obtain'd*
mercy of the Lord to be faithful^e, and ^{e 1 Cor.}
 again, *After my judgement, and I* ^{7. 25.}
think that I also have the Spirit of
God^f. But this is not spoke with ^{f ver. 40.}
 the Authority of an Apostle or
 Teacher sent by God, but in such
 a style as implies only an ordinary
 Assistance, such as any Pious skil-
 ful Pastor may still expect: for 'tis
 as if he had said, "I do sincere-
 "ly give you the best Advice I
 "can, my judgement is not byass'd
 "by any corrupt end, I have no
 "other design but to promote
 "God's Glory and your good, and

“ therefore I may be pretty confi-
 “ dent that the Spirit of God whose
 “ influences I have often felt, hath
 “ now so far Assisted me, that
 “ I have advised you for the
 “ best.

3. Another Instance wherein we
 may reasonably suppose the Apo-
 stles spoke without Inspiration, is
when they discourse of such things as our
Saviour told them they must be con-
tent to be ignorant of. Such as was
 the time when the *Day of Judgment*
should come, which was a secret God
 had reserved ^g to himself: and of
Restoring the Kingdom to Israel ^h. As
 to the former of these, 'tis plain
 the Apostles thought the Day of
 Judgement would come in their
 own time, or within a very little
 while afterward ⁱ. But this they
 only gathered by Humane Reason-
 ing, and conjectures drawn from
 some Expressions found in the Old
 Testament, or used by our Saviour,
 such as the Calling the times
 of the Gospel *the Latter Days*, an
 Expression often used by the Pro-
 phets, and our Saviour's joining
 toge-

^g Matt.

24. 36.

^h Act. 1. 6.

ⁱ See

1 Thes.

4. 14.

2 Thes.

2. 2.

1 Cor. 10.

11.

--15. 52.

2 Cor. 5.

3.

2 Pet. 3. 4.

1 Pet. 4. 7.

Heb. 9.

26.

together the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the End of the World in *S. Matthew* the 24th. And as the event has proved that they were mistaken, so they themselves did not pretend to Revelation for what they said in this case, but spoke of it in doubtful terms, as may be seen in the place above cited ^k, *If so* ^{k 2 Cor.}
be we shall be found Cloth'd, not naked, ^{5. 3.}
 for so the Words should be Translated. <sup>Εἰ γὰρ ἐν-
 δυνάμει ᾤκη-
 σαι ἡμετέρας,
 ὡς ᾤκησεν
 ἡμετέρας.</sup>

In these cases I think 'twill be no prejudice to the Divine Inspiration of the Apostles, to allow them to have spoke like Men. And 'tis unreasonable for any to pretend, that if we grant thus much, we do in effect give up the Cause, and that then 'twill be impossible to distinguish what the Apostles say by the Spirit, and what they speak of themselves. For sure Men may distinguish if they please, the Mysteries of Faith, and the Rules of Practice, from a *Cloke* and *Parchments*, or a *Journey to Corinth*: which belong to the first excepted Case. And in the second, we have

1 Cor.

7. 12.

2 Cor.

11. 17.

1 Cor.

7. 25.

2 Cor.

8. 8, 10.

the Apostle himself plainly distinguishing this from his usual way of Writing, and telling us that 'tis *he speaks, not the Lord*^l, and that *he had no Commandment from the Lord, but only gave his Judgement*^m. The same Expression we find elsewhere in a like caseⁿ, viz. concerning the measures of Charity, which are to be settled by the Rules of Prudence, and don't fall under a Divine Command. Now if an *Exception confirms a Rule in Cases not Excepted*, we may justly infer from the Apostles setting a mark upon these Discourses to distinguish them from Divine Commands, that where there is no such distinguishing mark, we must suppose him to deliver what he says under the Character of an Apostle and a Messenger of God, unless the nature of the Discourse do plainly imply the contrary, and be such as properly belongs to the two other Heads of excepted Cases. As to the third Instance of Excepted Cases, the Evangelists have sufficiently forewarn'd us not to look upon

upon any Mans Judgement as Infallible in this matter, since they have Recorded ° those words of o Matt. 24. 36. Mark 13. 32. our Saviour, where he tells his Disciples, that the *Day and Hour of the General Judgement was a secret God has reserved to himself*, and has not thought fit to reveal it to any Creature of what Rank or Degree soever; *no not to the Son himself*: and tho he were the great Prophet of the Church, yet twas no part of his Commission to reveal the Counsel of God in this matter: and therefore to be sure his Disciples would never pretend to know more then their Master.

Having thus considered the Cases in which the Apostles spake or writ without Inspiration, I proceed in the

II. Place to shew, that *Excepting those Cases, the Apostles writ and spake by the particular Assistance and Direction of the Spirit.*

Our Author confines the Infallibility of their Preaching and Writing to those things which they

*Learn'd from Christ, or related as
 spoken by him* ^{p.} But as to the Ar-
 guments which they fram'd upon
 those Principles, and the Conse-
 quences they deduc'd from the Old
 Testament, here he supposes them
 to have used only their own Me-
 mory and Judgment, tho he grants
 these Discourses of theirs are to
 be received, because *there's nothing
 in them but what is conformable to the
 Doctrine of Christ and to right Reason,
 and nothing that can lead us into the
 Belief of what is false or contrary to
 Piety* ^{q.} This, as exactly as I can
 gather, is all the Authority he
 allows the Sermons and Writings
 of the Apostles: and this indeed
 is as much Authority as can be
 given to any Humane Discourse,
 and tho it does not exclude all possi-
 bility, yet it excludes all likelyhood
 of error. But as we look upon the A-
 postles to have been somewhat more
 than *Sound Divines*, or Men that ve-
 ry well understood the Doctrine
 which they were to teach others:
 so their Discourses and Writings
 have been always esteem'd of an
 higher

p Fr. p.

256, 257.

Eng. p.

69, 7c.

q En. p.

112, 131,

135. Fr. p.

282, 283.

224, 227.

higher Rank than any Religious Treatises purely Humane, which however solid and true they may be, are to be judged of by these Writings, and are no further true than they agree with them. The Scripture makes this the Characteristick of an Apostle, whereby he was distinguish'd from the other Inspir'd persons who were then in the Church, viz. *that he did not learn the Gospel in an Humane way^r, but purely by Revelation.* S. Paul might have been sufficiently instructed in the Gospel, by those who were *Pillars in the Church^r*, so as to have been out of all likelihood either of mistaking any part of it himself, or leading others into error: but we see this way of Instruction was not sufficient to advance him to the Dignity of the Apostolate, and therefore Christ himself made a particular Revelation of the whole Gospel to him^t, that he might not be *Inferior* in any respect *to the chiefest Apostles.* And since the Gospel was communicated to him and the rest of the Apostles

*τὸ ἐκ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου
ἤρτων.*

Gal. I. II.

compar.

with ver.

12. & 1.

v. 1 Cor.

2. 10.

f v. Gal.

2. 6, 9.

τὸ ὅπου

supr. &

1 Cor.

11. 23.

Eph. 3.

3, 4.

Apostles by Divine Revelation, only that they might teach it to others, whether by Word or Writing, with the greater assurance and certainty, and without any danger of error, their Discourses which were design'd for the Instruction of the Church, must be the effects of this supernatural habit of Christian Knowledge, which God infus'd into their minds. I have shewed in the former Chapter ^u, *that the same Assistance accompanied the Apostles in their Writing which did in their Preaching*, and therefore shall now speak of these two indifferently, and shew what kind of Authority the Apostles claim'd in either of them. S. Paul says ^w *that God has revealed the deep things, and the Mysteries of the Gospel to the Apostles by the Spirit*: which probably were the same things Christ told his Disciples, *they were not able to bear while he was with them* ^x. Such was particularly the *Doctrine of the Cross*, which S. Paul's Discourse chiefly relates to in that place ^y. These things S. Paul says ^z *they*

^u P. 29.

^w 1 Cor.
2. 10.

^x John
16. 12.

^y 1 Cor. 1.
18, &c &c
c. 2. 2

^a they spoke and taught others, ^z *Ib. ver.*
and that too in the *Words which the* ^{13.}

Holy Ghost taught them. Where the
word λογος comprehends their
style ^a as well as their Arguments, ^a *Ver. 1.*

and shews there's a greater regard ^{& 4.}
to be had to the style of the Apo-
stles, than our Author ^b is willing ^{b v. loc.}
to allow, and even for that very ^{supr. citat.}
Reason which he alledges as an ^{p. 35.}

Argument, why 'tis not dictated by
the Spirit, viz. because 'tis plain
and without any Affectation of
Wit or Learning, and conform'd
to the style of the Old Testament.

For this style however *Negligent*
and Careless our Author may think
it ^c, the Apostles used by the di- ^{c Fr. p.}
rection of the Holy Ghost, as ap- ^{233.}
pears from this place. It follows ^{En. p. 145.}

immediately, *Comparing Spiritual*
things with Spiritual, where the
word συγγεγονως may signify *Ex-*
plaining, Illustrating ^d, i. e. proving ^{d v. Grot.}
one Divine Revelation by another, ^{in locum.}

the Revelations of the New Te-
stament by those of the Old. At
last the Apostle concludes, ^e *We* ^{e Ib. ver.}
have the mind of the Christ, and there- ^{16.}
fore

fore ye are to hearken to us, and receive what we say, tho in many things not agreeing with the Principles of Philosophy, or Worldly Wisdom, which the Apostle in the
f 1 *Cor.* I. Verses before ¹ had undervalued, in
 20, &c. comparifon of the Gospel. In all
 c2. 1, &c. which Discourse *S. Paul* plainly ascribes his and the rest of the Apostles Preaching to the Instructions the Holy Ghost gave them, without making any restrictions, and particularly that part of it which consisted in drawing Consequences, and bringing Proofs from the Old Testament.

Again we find the same Apostle threatning those that despise his Advice, as *not despising man but God,*
g 1 *Thef.* *who gave the Apostles his holy Spirit* 8,
 4-8. that they might teach with uncontroulable Authority. And I think we may fairly conclude from hence, that *St. Paul* expected all his Precepts and Instructions should be submitted to, not meerly as coming from one of the Governours of the Church, but as having something more then Humane Authority,

thority, and being derived from the Spirit of God. For what he says in this place, tho it immediately respect only those Advices which are contain'd in the foregoing part of the Chapter, may by parity of Reason be applied to all other Apostolical injunctions: for as the words are general, and do not specify that the Apostle deliver'd these particular Rules by an extraordinary Revelation, more than any others which he elsewhere gives, so neither are the Advices such in their own Nature, as require a greater degree of Inspiration to deliver them, than the other Exhortations and Commands which are every where to be found in the Apostolical Writings. From whence I conclude, we ought to look upon those Writings as a Divine Rule of Faith and Practise, and that he who despises or undervalues them, *despises not man, but God, who gave his holy Spirit to the Authors of them.* And how far our Author may be guilty of this fault, I leave it to God and his
own

own Conscience to Judge. I proceed to shew

III. *That the Assistance which the Holy Spirit gave to the Apostles did not consist only in refreshing their Memories, or Improving their Natural Faculties, but was in several respects a new degree of supernatural Knowledge.*

Our Author is willing to believe, as appears by the places ^h I have before cited, that the Assistance the Holy Ghost gave to the Apostles, *did chiefly, and in a manner only consist in refreshing their memory, and recalling to their mind what our Saviour had taught them.* And agreeably to this opinion he tells us ⁱ, *that when our Saviour promises his Disciples ^k, That the Holy Ghost shall teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance, these latter words apparently explain the foregoing,* as if the Holy Ghost's teaching them was nothing else but bringing to their remembrance what Christ had taught them before. Now I deny not but that our Saviour declar'd to his

b Fr. p.
25 + 257.
h. ng. p.
66. -- 70.

i Fr. p.
255. En.
p. 67.
k John
15. 26.

his Disciples *the whole Counsel of God*, and therefore when he gave them Commission to *go and teach all Nations*, he makes this the Rule they were to go by in Preaching, *viz. to teach whatever he had commanded them*¹, as containing the whole Doctrine of Christianity: (Matt. 28. 20.)
 but granting all this, yet 'twill appear from several instances, that the Assistance of the Spirit was something more than bringing to their remembrance what Christ had said unto them. For

1. *Some things our Saviour did not only not explain to them fully, but likewise made use of such Expressions when he spoke of them, as were accommodated to the Notions the Apostles were prepossess'd with.* Thus when He discoursed to them of the Nature of his Kingdom, he made use of such Expressions as in their most natural and obvious Sense did imply, that 'twas to be a Temporal One: for he described the happiness which his Disciples were to enjoy in it, by *eating and drinking at his Table, and sitting upon twelve Thrones*

m Luke

22. 30.

Matt. 19.

28.

Thrones judging the twelve Tribes of Israel ^m. Which Expressions did tend directly to confirm them in their prejudices concerning the Worldly Grandeur of Christ's kingdom: our Saviour not thinking it a proper season as yet to wean them from these Opinions, which had taken such deep root in their minds, that they could not be extirpated all of a sudden, but must be removed by gentle and easy degrees. Now to give the Apostles a right understanding as to this matter, 'twas not sufficient the holy Spirit should recall to their memory the words which our Saviour had used upon this subject, for those alone would rather confirm them in the false Notions they had entertain'd concerning these things, than instruct them in the true one: but 'twas further requisite, that the Spirit should give them a clear and distinct apprehension of the Spiritual Nature of Christ's Kingdom, and wherein the Glory and Happiness it promises, consists: and should further inform them
for

for what Reasons our Saviour chose, in compliance with their apprehensions, and in conformity to the Style of the Old Testament, to wrap up these things in Obscurity, and discourse of them under the vail of Types and Figures. And I think this was to enlighten their minds with a new degree of Supernatural Knowledge.

2. But besides those things which our Saviour concealed under Types and Figures, *There were others he obscurely Express'd in Parables.* As the Calling of the Gentiles in the Parable ^a of the *Houſholder that went out at the latter end of the Day to hire Labourers into his Vineyard.* The rejection of the Jews under the Parable ^b of *the persons invited to a Marriage Feast, who would not come.* Several other instances of the same kind might be given. Now to understand these things perfectly, something more was requisite than just to remember our Saviour's words: as is plain by the Disciples asking our Saviour the meaning of another Parable of his,

^a Matt.
20. 5, 6.

^b Matt.
22. 1.

E

viz,

c Matt.
13. 36. v.
c. 15. 15.

viz. *That of the tares of the Field*.

The words they remembred perfectly well, but were at a loss for the meaning and design of them, and therefore desir'd him to explain it to them. And by the same Reason there was need of a greater degree of Illumination, to certify them that the Gentiles were to be *Fellow-heirs, and partakers of the Promises of Christ*, than the bare putting them in mind of those short hints our Saviour had given them concerning this matter, would amount to. And accordingly we find that St. *Peter* had need of a Vision ^d to instruct him in this matter: and even that extraordinary Revelation seem'd scarce sufficient to convince him of this truth. For afterward, notwithstanding the Vision he had formerly seen, he relaps'd again into his old notions, and separated himself from the Gentile-Converts at *Antioch* ^e. Which is a pregnant instance how much need the Apostles had of an extraordinary degree of Clearness and Evidence, fully to instruct

e Gal. 2.
11.

instruct and convince them in those points of Christianity that were opposite to the Opinions they had formerly imbraced: and that something more was requisite to that purpose, than just to remember what our Saviour had said upon this Subject. For even that Vision it self did not fully explain to St. *Peter* God's Counsel and purpose, and 'tis likely he thought there was no more implied by it, than that he should receive those Gentiles, who voluntarily offer'd themselves. The first that were sent to *Preach* the Gospel to the Gentiles were S. *Paul* and S. *Barnabas*, when the *Holy Ghost* separated them for this purpose ^f. And 'tis upon this Account that St. *Paul* calls himself ^{2.} the *Apostle of the Gentiles*: and says in express terms that the Salvation of the Gentiles, by their being Incorporated into the Church, and making one Body with the Jews, was a Doctrine which was but then newly ^h REVEALED to the *Apostles and Prophets* by the SPIRIT. And we may observe

^f Acts 13.

^{2.} comp.

with ver.

46.

^g Rom.

11. 13.

Gal. 2. 9.

Eph. 3. 1.

1 Tim.

2. 7.

^h Eph.

3. 5, 6.

i 1 Cor.
 14. 6, 26,
 30.
 --2. 10.
 Eph. 1. 17.
 --3. 5.

serve that the same S. Paul sometimes expresses the Knowledge of the Gospel, with which the holy Spirit furnisht the Apostles, and Inspir'd persons of those times, by the word *Ἀποκαλύψις*, to imply that in several respects, it was not so much a Revival of what our Saviour taught them while he was upon Earth, as a piece of Knowledge intirely new, and a distinct Revelation.

3. We may instance in another sort of true and proper Inspiration which belong'd to the Apostles, and that is, *The gift of Prophecy it self, and of applying the Prophecies of the Old Testament to the times of the Gospel, and shewing that they are truly fulfilled in Christ and his Church.*

k Fr. p.
 283. En.
 p. 113.

Our Author grants ^k that God immediately imparted to the Apostles those Prophecies which are to be found in their Writings, so that this point need not to be further Insisted upon. I proceed therefore to consider their gift of *Explaining the Prophecies of the Old Testament*, and applying them to the times of the Gospel.

Gospel. And here 'tis to be considered, that tho our Saviour did explain many Prophecies to his Disciples after his Resurrection, concerning his own Sufferings and Exaltation, and the Preaching of the Gospel to all Nations ¹, yet there were several other Prophecies which they could not understand, till they were indued with *Power from on High*, and thereby inabled to comprehend the great Mysteries of God's Oeconomy, as in several other Instances, so particularly in the *Rejecting of the Jews* and *Calling of the Gentiles*. And therefore those Dispensations of the Old Testament which the Apostles apply to these purposes, viz. the Allegory of *Ismael* and *Isaac* ^m, of *Jacob* and *Esau* ⁿ, by which *S. Paul* illustrates this matter: the words of *Moses* in his *Song* ^o, which he applies to the same purpose ^p: as also the words of *Habakkuk* ^q: I say the explaining the *Mystical Sense* and Design of these, and such like Occurrences and Prophecies of the Old Testament, is to be reckon'd

/Luk. 24.

27, 45,

46, 47.

m Rom.

2. 7.

Gal. 4. 24.

n Rom.

9. 10. &c.

o Deut.

32. 21.

p Rom.

10. 19.

q Acts.

13. 41.

1 Cor.
12. 8.

1 Rom.
16. 25.
1 Cor. 2. 7.
Eph. 3. 9.
(1 Cor.
1. 26.

a peculiar gift bestowed upon the Apostles by the holy Spirit. 1. Because they themselves look upon it as such, as appears by St. Paul's reckoning *γνῶσις* among the *χαρίσματα*, which word certainly signifies the gift of Interpreting the Mysteries of the Old Testament and applying them to the State of things under the New. 2. Because those *Providential Occurrences* had a secret and hidden design in them, which could be discover'd by none but God that order'd them: who as he comprehends the most distant Ages in one single view, so in his disposing and ordering the more Remarkable Events under the Old Testament, had all along an Eye to the times under the New. 3. As to the Prophecies, 'tis not likely that any persons without a Supernatural Illumination, could look to the end and utmost Completion of them, since the Prophets themselves had not this priviledge granted them, as appears from those places^r where the Gospel is called a *Mystery kept secret since the World began*:

began: a hidden Mystery, and hid from Ages and Generations: And especially from those remarkable words of St. Peter ¹, *Of which Sal-* 1 Pet. 1.
10, 11, 12.
vation [by Christ] the Prophets have inquir'd and searched diligently, who prophesied of the Grace that should come unto you, searching what and what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the Sufferings of Christ, and the Glory that should follow: To whom it was revealed that not to themselves, but to us they did Minister these things. From whence it appears, that tho the Prophets were very Inquisitive after the Manner how, and the Time when their Prophecies should be fulfill'd, yet they had only this general Satisfaction, that they should not be fulfill'd in their own time. And I think we may infer from thence, that the perfect understanding them was reserv'd to the times of the Messias. And tho the event would sufficiently Interpret the meaning of several of them, yet there were some that needed a

greater Light than that to understand them, and apply them aright. To which we may add, that the manner of Interpreting the Prophecies of the Old Testament which the Apostles used, is a Rule to after Ages how they are to Interpret the Prophetical Writings, and prove the Truth of the Gospel by them: and therefore the same reasons which prove the Writings of the Apostles in general Divinely Inspir'd, because they are a standing Rule of Christian Faith, may be applied to that part of them which consists in explaining the Mystical Sense of the Old Testament Writings. But concerning the Mystical Sense of the Prophets, I shall have an opportunity to speak more fully in the next Chapter. And so much may suffice for the proof of the third general Head, viz. *That the Assistance which the holy Spirit gave the Apostles was something more than refreshing their Memories, and recalling to their minds what our Saviour had said unto them.* I proceed to shew

IV. *That*

IV. *That the Apostles had an extraordinary Assistance when they were summon'd before Magistrates upon the account of their Religion: and to vindicate their Behaviour at that time, from the unbecoming and Irreverent Reflections of this Author.*

One would think the words of our Saviour were plain enough in this point^u: *Take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in the same hour what ye ought to say: for 'tis not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost*, says S. Mark, *the Spirit of your Father*, saith S. Matthew, *speaks in you*. If this had been only a Spirit of Courage and Holiness arising from the Belief of the Gospel, as Mr. N. pretends^w, twould have requir'd a great deal of Care, Consideration and Reflection, to keep it warm upon their Hearts, that it might not cool when danger approached. And our Saviour's precluding the use of Humane means, proves that it was something more than an ordinary Grace, which always requires the Cooperation of our Natural Faculties:

^u Matt.
10. 19, 20.
Mark 13.
11.

^w Fr. p.
241. Eng.
p. 44

culties: and shews that 'twas as much a new Impulse which the Apostles were to feel upon their minds on such occasions, as any Prophetick Inspiration whatsoever. But notwithstanding the plain import of the words, rather than own an extraordinary Inspiration, the natural force of the words must be dwindled away into nothing, under the pretence of their being only a *Hebrew way of speaking*^s, like *The Spirit of jealousy, of slumber, &c.* which are found in the Old Testament. As if there was no difference in the nature of the Expression between the *Holy Ghost*, or the *Spirit of the Father*, and the *spirit of jealousy* or *stupidity*. But this is the constant method of our *New Interpreters* of Scripture, that don't care to believe any thing to be there, but what Natural Powers can effect, and Intellectual ones comprehend. When they are pressed with plain words of Scripture, they will not out of Good Manners, in downright terms deny their Authority, but think it more decent

^s Fr. p.
244 Eng.
p. 49.

decent to evade it, by explaining away all the force of them, and alledging the *Metaphorical and Pompous* way of speaking, which the *Eastern Languages* use, which seems to imply a great deal more in it, than the Writer really design'd. Thus *Spinoza* tells us, that tho there are wonderful stories told in the old Testament, yet that is no proof that the things themselves were Miraculous, or such as exceeded the power of Natural Agents, for the Jews loved to talk big, and make a great deal more of a story by their way of telling it, than the matter of Fact really was. Just so the *Socinians* when they are pressed with plain Texts of Scripture for the Divinity or Satisfaction of Christ, make this their constant Refuge, *that the Hebrew Language is full of Metaphors*, and the Writers don't mean half so much as they say. Now this is an excellent device to render the Scriptures an insignificant Book, or which is much the same, make it say whatever these New Expositors

y Theol.
Polit. c. 6.

sitors please. But before this trick will pass, these Gentlemen should convince us, that since 'tis impossible to know the meaning of the Scripture by the words, 'tis they only have the secret of telling us its true Sense, and the Key to these Mystical Characters.

And here I shall take occasion to reflect upon another passage in these *Letters*, which indeed belongs to the Subject treated of in the former part of this Chapter, viz. *Concerning the Assistance of the Holy Ghost which our Saviour promised his Disciples*: but being another Essay of our Author's dexterity in this new way of Interpreting Scripture, I chose to make my remarks upon it in this place. 'Tis his gloss up-

2 Joh. 16.
13, 14, 15.

on that place of St. John², *He shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear that shall he speak, &c.*

2 Fr. p.

He observes² that "*these words must be extremely figurative, because*

254.

En. p. 66.

"*the Holy Ghost properly speaking, did not hear from God or Jesus Christ, that which he was to Inspire the Apostles with. From whence it must follow,*

follow, (or else this Observation of his is Impertinent) that the words immediately foregoing ^b, *When the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth*, must be very Figurative too, and not imply that the Spirit really taught the Apostles any thing in a proper Sense. Now to pass by this Consequence of his, *viz.* that plain words are to be understood Metaphorically, because they are joyn'd with words that have a Metaphor in them, I can't but observe thus much for the clearing the sense of this Text, that our Saviour uses no other expressions concerning the Holy Spirit here, than what he had often used before of himself, when he so often says, that *what he taught he had heard and received from the Father* ^c. And I hope 'twill be granted that our Saviour taught his Disciples in a proper Sense, without a Metaphor: and why then must it follow from this way of speaking, that the Holy Ghost did not?

^b John

16. 13.

^c John

5. 30.

c. 8. 26. 40

c. 15. 15.

But

But to return to our present
 subject. *“ That he says, ^b which
 inclines him to believe that the fore-
 mention'd Promise of our Saviour,
 the Holy Ghost, or Spirit of the
 Father, shall teach you in that
 hour what ye ought to say,
 means no more then this, viz. The
 Spirit of Courage and Holiness which
 the Gospel produces in your hearts,
 will teach you what ye ought to say,
 is, That in comparing this Promise
 with the Event, it seems not to have
 been perform'd in any other sense
 than what he has now given. But
 has he indeed compar'd it with
 all the Events mention'd in the
 History of the Acts? Not at all:
 only has pick'd out two Instances,
 which he thought he could make
 Exceptions against. Sure if he
 had dealt fairly and impartially in
 this matter, he would not have
 pass'd by the Boldness of Peter and
 John^c, which was so Extraordina-
 ry it made the Sanhedrim wonder:
 nor the Couragious Behaviour of
 all the Apostles^d: in both which
 Cases the Apostles told the Sanhe-
 drim*

b Fr. p.

241.

En. p. 44.

c Act. 4.

13.

d Act. 5.

29.

drim to their faces, of their Horrid Sin in Murdering the Messias, and that there was no way to Salvation, but by Believing in him whom they had Crucified. The Event in both these Cases seems to come up to the highest Sense of our Savior's Words : and if we had an exact History of the Sufferings of the Apostles, I do not question but we should find many more Proofs of the Accomplishment of this Promise. Since in those few Remains that we have of the *Genuine Acts* of the *Martyrs*, there are eminent Instances of their Courage in Professing the Truth, * which at First Sight discover something more than Humane, and may justly be look'd upon as one of the greatest and most convincing Arguments of the Truth of Christianity, and the Divine Power which accompanied its True Professors. I am sure *Justin Martyr* confesses that this very Argument prevail'd with him to embrace the Christian Religion. And if the Behaviour of the

Mar-

*e v. Acta
Ignat. per
Usserium
Edit.*

*Martyr.
Polycarpi
ap. Euseb.
H. E.*

*l. 4 c. 15.
Acta*

*Martyr.
Lugd. &
Vienn.*

*Ibid. l. 5.
c. 1.*

*Cypriani
Passio, o-
peribus e-
jus prefix.*

f Apol. 1.

Martyrs in aftertimes was so Extraordinary, we cannot think that the Apostles were in this respect Inferiour to their Disciples. Now a man that had a real Concern for the honour of our Saviour and his Apostles, and was desirous to magnify the Power of God's Grace, and set it in the best Light he could, would not have pass'd over all the Evidences for it, and only insisted upon those Instances, which he thought would lessen and obscure it.

But let us see whether the Instances he brings, do really so much lessen the Promise of our Saviour as he imagines. As for St. *Paul's Behaviour to the High Priest*^g, which is our Author's first Instance^h, he cannot be ignorant that some Expositors of the best Noteⁱ, as well as his Adversary Mr. *Simon*^k, understand those words of his, *God shall smite thee thou whitened wall*, as spoken by the Authority and in the Style of a Prophet, as our Saviour call'd *Herod Fox*^l, and St. *Paul* call'd *Nero Lyon*^m.

^g Act.

23. 3.

^h Fr. p.

241.

Eng. p.

45.

ⁱ Grot.

Estim.

Beza.

^k Eng. p.

178.

Fr. p. 259.

^l Luk. 13.

32.

on^m.

on^m. And they that maintain this O- ^{m2Tim.}
 pinion, do not suppose that St. Paul ^{4. 17.}
 in the next words beg'd Pardon,
 and confess'd that he was to blame
 for what he said, as our Author
 takes for granted that he didⁿ. But *f Ubi sup.*
 they take this to be the real Sense of
 the 5th v. tho purposely concealed
 under ambiguous Terms, " I can-
 " not believe or own such a man to
 " be High Priest, who came into his
 " Place by those ill Acts as *Ananias*
 " did, for if I had look'd upon him
 " as High Priest, I should not have
 " transgressed the Law, in giving
 " him such disrespectful Language.
 But if we understand the Place in
 the same Sense which Mr. N. does,
 and own the Apostle to have been
 surpriz'd by Passion, yet still there
 will appear evident Tokens of a Di-
 vine Assistance accompanying him,
 if we take an entire View of the
 whole history of his Sufferings at Je-
 rusalem: With what an Undaunted
 Resolution he went thither, when
 he knew beforehand, *That Bonds*
and Afflictions did abide him, and
did not value his Life, so he might
 F *finisb*

o Act. 20. *finish his Course with joy*. How he
 23, 24. persisted in the same Resolution,
 notwithstanding all the Importu-
 nities and Tears of his Friends,
 being ready not only to be bound
 at Jerusalem, but also to die for the
 p Act. Name of the Lord Jesus : ^r with
 21. 14. what Courage he sets forth the
 Grounds of his Conversion before
 q Act. 22. the enrag'd Multitude ^q: with what
 Authority he Preach'd concern-
 ing the Faith in Christ, and the
 Fundamentals of Christianity to
 Felix, and laid his Sins so home
 to him that he made him tremble ^r:
 r Act. 24. How powerfully he pleaded for
 25. himself and his Religion before
 r Act 26. Agrippa ^r, so as to make Impressi-
 on upon the King himself, and al-
 most perswade him to be a Christian.
 He that shall lay all these things
 together, will see Reason to ad-
 mire the Power of God's Grace
 in St. Paul's Behaviour at Jerusa-
 lem: and will not think that that
 one Slip, if it were one, is able
 to obscure the Glory of all the
 other parts of it.

And as for that Prudential Act of
 St.

St. Paul, which our Author sayes
'bath nothing of Inspiration in it, viz. f Fr. p. 242. Eng. p. 46.
 his dividing the Council^t, and
 thereby making one half of them
 his Friends; 'twas exactly agree- f Act. 23. 6.
 able to our Savior's Advice to the
 Apostles^v, *To use all Prudence that* u Matth. 10. 16.
was consistent with Innocency, as this
 certainly was. But besides, it im-
 plied an excellent Argument *ad*
homines, viz. to Jews, in behalf of
 Christianity, namely, that it was
 unreasonable for them to reject
 that Religion, or persecute the
 Abettors of it, whose great De-
 sign 'tis to establish the Doctrine
 of the Resurrection, the Belief of
 which Point, the chiefest of their
 own Sects for Reputation look'd
 upon as one of the principal Ar-
 ticles of their Faith. And there-
 fore we find St. Paul, knowing
 what force there was in it, insist
 again and again upon the very
 same Apology for himself^s. Nay x Act. 24. 15. - c. 26. 6, 7.
 God himself approved of it, as ap-
 pears by the *Vision* which St. Paul
 had to encourage him the very
 next night after his Appearance - c. 28. 20.

before the Council, by which our Lord himself gave Testimony to him, that he had witness'd a good Confession^y.

^y Act. 23.
11.

^z Fr. p.
243.
Eng. p.
48. 49.
^b Act. 7.

But 'tis a wonder to me that our ^z Author should think St. *Stephen's* Behaviour and Harangue ^b a proper Instance, to shew that the Apostles and primitive Confessors had no immediate Assistance of the Holy Ghost, when they appear'd before secular Magistrates. For if Courage to speak the Truth, and to back it with unanswerable Arguments, be a sign of an Extraordinary Assistance, certainly no person ever gave greater Evidence of it than St. *Stephen*. To declare publickly that the *Temple and its Worship should shortly be destroy'd^c*, was such an Invidious Truth, that the Apostles themselves did not think fit at first to speak it openly, but shew'd a great respect to the establish'd Worship, by constantly attending upon it^d. The Dissolution of the Mosaical Oeconomy, being a Truth that the new Converts from Judaism were not

^c Act. 6.
14.

^d Act. 3.
1. -18. 21.
-20. 16.
-21. 26.

not yet able to bear. But even this Truth St. *Stephen* had the Boldness to profess, and maintain'd it too by a continued series of Argument, from *Abraham* whom the Jews boasted to be their Father, down to the building of the Temple. Wherein he shews that the Patriarchs and Founders of the Jewish Nation, were accepted by God before the Temple or its Service had a Beginning: nay that *Moses* himself the Institutor of this Worship, prophesied of *Christ*^e, and design'd the Tabernacle only for a *Pattern of Heavenly*^e *things*^f. Besides this St. *Stephen* all along made Reflections upon the stubborn and refractory Temper of the Jews from the beginning, and told them that their Rejecting and Murdering of *Christ* when he came, was but agreeable to their usage of the Prophets who foretold him^g. I think he that said these things had the Gift of *παρρησία*, which the Apostles pray'd for^h, in a great measure. And tho our Author is pleas'd to say, ⁱ that

^e Acts 7.

37.

^f Ibid

ver. 44.

^g Ib. ver.

52.

^h Acts 4.

29.

ⁱ Ubi

supr.

*St. Stephen mentions divers Circumstances of History which were nothing to the purpose, yet for my part I must declare I see none but what are necessary to make it a full and Complete Narrative, or else serve to set forth the ill manners of the Jews under the several Dispensations of Providence. And I am apt to think St. Luke was of the same mind: for abstracting from his Divine Character, he was too Judicious a man to trouble himself or his Reader, with a Rehearsal of impertinent Circumstances. I am sure there are several particulars which are of great use to explain the Writings of Moses^k, which we could never have known, if this Discourse had not been preserv'd. This Gentleman may call these *Impertinencies* if he pleases, but I believe few will follow him in this bold and Unscholar-like Censure, and 'tis well St. Luke was of another mind, for we should have had a great Loss, if he had not preserved them. And as for those par-*
ticu-

* Acts 7.
20,--26.

ticulars which he says ' *cannot be* ^{Ubi}
reconciled with the History of the ^{supr.}
Old Testament ^m, if *S. Luke* made ^m *Acts*
 these Mistakes, they have been ^{7. 16.}
 accounted for above : ⁿ if *St. Ste-* ⁿ *Supr.*
phen himself did, I suppose the ^{p. 45, 46.}
 same Defence that is made for a
 Writer, will hold more strongly
 for a Speaker. And tho we sup-
 pose *St. Stephen* to have been *full*
of the Holy Ghost when he spake ^o *Acts 6.*
 yet there's no reason the Spirit ^{10. 7. 55.}
 should dictate a History to him,
 which he was before so well ac-
 quainted with. And why may
 we not say, that although the
 Holy Spirit were so remarkably
 present with him at this time,
 that the Glories which were shed
 forth upon his Soul, shin'd thro
 his Body, and made *his face look*
like the face of an Angel ^p, yet the ^{Acts}
 Holy Ghost thought fit not to ^{6. 15.}
 supply the Defect of his Memo-
 ry in one or two particulars,
 to shew that Inspir'd persons, e-
 ven in their Brightest Minutes,
 are still but men, and that the
Excellency might appear to be of
 F 4 God,

God, and not of themselves?

What has been said is sufficient to shew what little ground there is for this Author's unworthy Reflections, upon the Behaviour of the First Christians before the Heathen Tribunals, wherein he seems not only to attack two or three Passages of Scripture, but to endeavour to overthrow one of the principal Arguments for the Truth of Christianity: for certainly never was there greater Evidence of a Divine Power present with its Professors, than when they were summon'd before the Magistrates, to give a *reason of the Hope that was in them*. I proceed in the

Vth. place, to *Answer the Objections which he has advanc'd against the Inspiration of the Apostles*.

1. The first which I shall take notice of is, *The Apostles Disputing and Conferring with each other, before they came to a Resolution at the Synod of Jerusalem*¹: which he thinks was needless among persons Inspir'd. As likewise that *Prophets should submit what they say,*
to

1 Fr. p.
248, 249.
Eng. p.
57.

to the Judgment of other Prophets,
according to St. Paul's order^r. 1 Cor.

But the force of this Objection 14. 29.
will be taken away, if we consider
that God distributed his *Gifts* to
each person severally as he thought
fit^a: so that even the greatest A- 1 Cor.
postles might think it necessary to 12. 11.
advise with their Brethren in mat-
ters of Consequence, where the
Edification and Peace of the whole
Church was nearly concern'd. And
indeed one reason why God gave
his Spirit *by Measure* to them seems
to be this, that he design'd to en-
gage all the Members of the Church
into a strict Union and Alliance
with each other by this means,
because they stood in need of one
another's help and direction: and
the eye could not say to the hand, I
have no need of thee; nor the head to
the feet, I have no need of you^b: i. e. Ibid.
the more Eminent Members of the v. 21.
Church very often stood in need
of the Assistance and Direction of
the Inferior and less considerable
ones. And accordingly we find
the Apostles and Heads of the
Church

Church were inform'd by the Inferior and more ordinary Members of it, of several particulars they were ignorant of before: so *Agabus* inform'd *St. Paul* of his sufferings at *Jerusalem*^c, and the *Holy Ghost* witness'd the same in every City^d, no doubt by persons of a much Inferior station in the Church than *St. Paul* himself. Thus the distribution of Spiritual Gifts in different Measures and Degrees, was very effectual to prevent *Schism* in the Body^e of the Church, and to oblige the Members to have the same care one for another. And we may observe to this purpose, that our Saviour made an especial promise of his presence among his Disciples, where two or three are gather'd together^f, to engage them thereby to preserve the *Unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*, and not to forsake the *Assembling themselves together*. And as by their exercising their gifts in the publick Assemblies, each Man's private gifts were produced in Common, and made serviceable to the Church in general:

so

^c *Act.* 21.

11.

^d *Act.* 20.

23.

^e *1 Cor.*

12. 25.

^f *Matth.*

18. 20.

so this prevented False Prophets
 creeping in among them, because
 they would presently be detected.
 Whereas if private Prophecy
 had been in use, an Impostor might
 have took his opportunity, and by
 imposing upon the weaker sort,
 have got such a reputation, be-
 fore the Cheat could have been
 discovered, that it would have been
 difficult afterward to have con-
 vinc'd Men of the Imposture. But
 by making every one that pretend-
 ed to Inspiration undergo a pub-
 lick Tryal, a false Prophet could
 not hope to escape long without
 being convinc'd by all and Judg'd by
 all. And this shews the reason-
 ableness of that Command of St.
Pauls, that the *Prophets should sub-*
mit what they say to the judgement of
their Brethren ^s: for since from the ^{g 1 Cor.}
 very beginning there were *False* ^{14. 29.}
Prophets and deceitful Workers, who
 indeavour'd to transform themselves
 into the true *Apostles and Messengers*
 of Christ ^b; the Apostles thought
 fit to lay down Rules for the Try-
 ing of *Spirits* ⁱ: and the discerning of
Spirits

^{b 2 Cor.}

^{11. 13.}

^{i 1 Cor.}

^{12. 3.}

^{1 Joh. 4.}

^{1, &c.}

k 1 Cor.
12. 10.

J. v. Euseb.
II. E. l. 5.
c. 16. 19.

xi v. Cl.
Dodwell.
Prole-
gom. in
Dissert.
Iren. n.
6 -9. &
Dissert 2.
in Iren. n.
26.

Spirits was a particular Gift design'd for this purpose ^k. Now the fittest way of doing this, was by the joynt advice of the Governors of the Church assembled together, as we find the Bishops of *Asia* meeting together, discovered the falseness of *Montanus* and his Followers pretences to Prophecy ^l. To all which we may add, that besides the usefulness of this method to secure the Church against Impostures, it has this further advantage in it, that what several Inspir'd persons did agree in, brought along with it greater evidence of its coming from God, than if it had been deliver'd only by one. For tho every thing which comes from God, deserves equal Credit in *It self*, yet there may be greater evidence to *Us* of the Divine Original of one Doctrine, than of another ^m. And as there were greater and more evident proofs of the Divine Mission of the Apostles, than of the Prophets in the Christian Church, and therefore the Apostles had the Precedence of the

the Prophets ^a, and the Prophets ⁿ 1 Cor. 12. 28.
 were to submit to their Orders,
 and Regulate their Gifts by their
 Injunctions ^a, tho what a true Pro- ⁿ 1 Cor. 14. 37.
 phet spoke was as much the word
 of God as what an Apostle did:
 so in like manner, that which was
 confirm'd by the concurring Te-
 stimony of Two or Three Inspir'd
 Witnesses, brought greater evi-
 dence of its Divine Authority, than
 that which relyed wholly upon the
 Credit and Integrity of One, be-
 cause two or three were less lyable
 to mistake than one. And there-
 fore we find our Saviour himself
 argues from the common Sentim-
 ents of Men, and appeals to the
 concurring Testimony of *John* ^p as ^p Joh. 5. 33.
 a Corroborating Evidence, tho his
 Miracles sufficiently proved the
 truth of his Mission: nay he reck-
 ons that the joint Testimony of
 his Father and himself is more cre-
 dible, (Humanely speaking) than
 either of them singly ^q.

And what has been said con-
 cerning Inspir'd persons of an In-
 ferior Rank, holds true of the A-
 postles ^q Joh. 8. 17, 18.

postles themselves : for tho I
 make no question, but the Holy
 Ghost was always so far present
 with them, as to guide and direct
 them in all matters that were of
 Consequence, such as that was
 which gave occasion to the Synod
 at *Jerusalem* : yet to make them ca-
 pable of this Assistance, we must
 suppose that they observed those
 Rules of our Saviour, which were
 necessary Conditions in order to
 the procuring this Assistance, one
 of which, as I have observ'd al-
 ready, was their Assembling toge-
 ther when they had opportunity,
 and where the Case concern'd the
 whole Church in general. And
 since the Apostles themselves did
 but *know in part*, and *prophecie in*
part^r, and consequently might re-
 ceive further Light from others,
 what the whole *College* of Apostles
 agreed in, came with greater Au-
 thority and Evidence of it's being
 God's Will, than what was deliver'd
 by one Apostle only. Just as we are
 more assur'd of the Truth of those
 Doctrines which are often repeat-
 ed

1 Cor.
 13. 2.

ed by different Writers in the Holy Scripture, than of those which are only mention'd by one: because the Authority of several Writers adds weight to the matter it self, and the comparing them together prevents our mistaking the sense of the Scripture concerning it; whereas what is but once mention'd is more liable to Ambiguities, and the Sense of it more easily mistaken. From what has been said, I hope it appears that there is sufficient reason why Inspir'd persons should consult each other; and that this is no prejudice to their Inspiration.

2. The second Objection is,
That the Holy Ghost which the Apostles received on the day of Pentecost had not taught them all they ought to know, so far was it from rendering them at first dash Infal-
libe, so that St. Peter needed a Vi-
sion to learn that he ought not to
scruple Preaching the Gospel to the
Gentiles.

Fr. P.
 249.
 Eng. P.
 53.

I do not know any body that ever yet maintain'd that the Spi-
 rit

rit once for all instructed the Apostles in all things that were needful for the Discharge of their Office. 'Tis certain several things were reveal'd to them by Degrees, and in proportion to the Exigences of the Church: and this Author himself owns as much, when he tells us, " *That the Apostles had* " *MANY Immediate Revelations and* " *DIVERS Heavenly Visions* . And as for the Descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, in a visible manner on the day of *Pentecost*, the chief Design of that was publickly to Authorize them to preach the Gospel, and to Initiate them into the Body of Christ's Church, which was then founded, and to do this by more solemn Tokens of the Divine Presence among the first Professors, than any other Institution could ever pretend to: according to what the *Baptist* foretold^u, and our Savior promis'd^x, that *John* *indeed baptized*, or admitted Profelytes with the bare Ceremony of *Water*, (which had been a Rite made use of by the Jews long before

u Fr. p.
252.
Eng. p.
62.

u Matth.
3. 11.
x Act. 1.
5.

fore upon such occasions) but the *Apostles should be Baptized* or admitted into the Church *with the Holy Ghost and with fire.*

3. The third Objection is, that
 “*When the Dispute arose whether* a Fr. p. 248.
 “*the Gentiles that were Converted* Eng. p. 57.
 “*were to be Circumcised or not, tho*
 “*St. Paul and St. Barnabas were*
 “*against this, yet their Authority was*
 “*not sufficient to put to silence the*
 “*Judaizing Christians, which was a*
 “*sign they did not look upon them as*
 “*Infallible. To the same purpose*
 he urges, “*The Believers that were* b Fr. p. 249.
 “*of the Circumcision contending with* Eng. p. 58.
 “*St. Peter for going to men un-*
 “*circumcised and conversing with*
 “*them* c. Act. 11

To begin with the latter part of 2, 3.
 the Objection: to the instance of *St. Peter* I answer, that the Converts of the Circumcision were thoroughly perswaded, that the Laws and Institutions of *Moses* were of perpetual Obligation, and therefore 'tis no wonder if at first they were surpriz'd to see any of them laid aside, and a door open'd

to let in the Gentiles to the same Privileges with the Jews, and to take away that Discrimination which the Law makes between the Jews and the rest of the world^d. And since this Action of *St. Peter's* touch'd them so nearly in their Privileges and Prerogative, or at least was contrary to the Traditions they had received from their Teachers, and held as sacred as the Law it self*, 'tis no wonder they were not easily satisfied about it, till they examin'd the reasons upon which *St. Peter* acted in this matter. And the Apostles never laid so much stress upon their Infallibility, as to require their Disciples to *believe them upon their own word*, as *Mr. N.* himself^e observes: or without demanding a reason why they did so. But if we should grant all this Objection contends for, certainly 'tis but a weak Argument that the Apostles were not Infallible, because some new Converts^f did not think so, who 'tis plain did not well understand the

^dExod.
19. 5, 6.
Deut. 7. 6.

* Matt.
15. 2.
Mar. 7. 3.
Joh. 18.
28.

^eFr. p.
283.
Eng. p.
112.

^fSee Mr.
Dodwel
of Schism
ch. 19.
sect. 18, 19.

the Principles of their own Religion, and had not as yet intirely submitted to the Authority of the Apostles. And by the same reason we may argue that our Saviour was not Infallible, (which yet Mr. N. himself looks upon ^s as a certain Truth) because his Disciples seem not to be satisfied sometimes of the Truth of what he sayes ^u, and demand of him a reason ⁱ of those Doctrines of his that look'd like Paradoxes to them.

g Fr. p.
257, 260,
281.
Eng. p.
70, 75,
109.
b Matth.
16. 22.
i Matth.
15. 15.

A great deal of what has been said will hold much stronger in the case of St. Paul and Barnabas ^k: for the admitting the Gentiles into the Church without Circumcision, must needs be thought a great Violation of the Law of Moses, by those that look'd upon it to be of perpetual Obligation in the Church of God. To which may be added, that St. Paul and Barnabas had not so clear and indisputable an Authority as the rest of the Apostles: not being of the number of the Twelve, whose Commission was so solemnly seal'd and

k Act 15.

ratified on the day of *Pentecost*. And they who were of a different Perswasion from them, would in all likelyhood lay hold of this Objection against their Authority, as Men are willing to take advantage of any Exception to an Authority that is against them. And accordingly we find in after times, when the Judaizing Christians found St. *Paul* zealous in asserting the Liberties of the Gentile Converts, and teaching men every where to *Apostatize from Moses*, as they term'd it¹, that they did what they could to lessen his Authority, and represented him as far Inferiour to the rest of the Apostles, and therefore that no great stress was to be laid upon his Doctrine, which forc'd him to vindicate himself and his Apostleship at large, *Galat. 1. and 2. Chapters.*

4. The fourth Objection is, ^m St. *Peter's Dissimulation at Antioch, for which St. Paul reprov'd him, as he tells usⁿ.*

And here I agree with our Author,

*ἡ ἀποστασία
ἀπὸ Μωϋσέως.*
Act. 21.
21.

^m Fr. p.
250.
Eng. p.
60.
ⁿ Gal. 2.
11.

thor, that St. Peter acted contrary to his Judgment, and dissembled his Opinion: for he that had been warned by a Vision^o, that he should ^o Act. 10. not call any man common or unclean, ^{28.} and but just before had a great hand in making the Decree at the Synod of Jerusalem^p, whereby ^p Act. 15. the Gentiles were made Members 7. of the Church upon even terms with the Jews, without taking the Yoke of the Law upon them: he after all this could not be really perswaded in his judgment, that he ought not to keep company with the Gentile Converts: tho his former prejudices might put some weight into the opposite Scale, and make him doubtful and wavering. Which might make his fear of displeasing the Jewish Christians, and giving them offence, work more powerfully upon him, and prevail with him to comply with them in this matter: and St. Paul expressly assigns his *fearing* [to offend] *them of the Circumcision*^q, as the cause of this ^q Gal. 2. his Behaviour. But tho this be ^{12.}

not a sufficient Reason why any man should dissemble the Truth, yet we may observe from *St. James's* Advice to *St. Paul*, ' that the Apostles were very tender of giving any offence to the Jewish Converts, who were very 'numerous, and whom they justly look'd upon as the most considerable part of the Church, and as it were the Elder Brethren, having a precedent Right to the Promises before the Gentiles '. This may be pleaded for an Excuse in behalf of *St. Peter*, tho' still we must confess as *St. Paul* tells us ", *that he did not walk uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel*, in this matter. And neither the Apostles themselves, nor any in their behalf, ever pretended that they were exempt from sin: but on the contrary, we find them freely own themselves to be *men of like Passions with others* : and that they *had this Treasure [of the Gospel] in earthen vessels* ', and were of the same make with other men. And therefore, since as our Author

† Act. 21.
20.

supra cited.
Act. 21
20.

† Act. 3.
26.
Rom. 15.
27.
" Gal. 2.
14.

× Act. 14.
15.
Jam. 5.
17.
† 2 Cor.
4. 7.

thor truly says ², *He alone is in-* 2 Fr. p.
260.
Eng. p.
75.
dowed with an absolute Infallibility,
who is incapable of sinning, I do
 freely grant that we are no fur-
 ther assur'd that the Apostles were
 free from Errour, than we find
 them free from Sin, which natu-
 rally leads men into it. I own
 likewise that this Instance of *St.*
Peter, is a good Argument against
 the perpetual Inspiration or Infal-
 libility of the Apostles, if we mean
 any more by it, than a habitual
 Knowledge of Divine Truth: for
 I cannot think *S. Peter* was under
 the immediate Conduct of the
 Holy Spirit, when he was guilty
 of this Behaviour. But I suppose
 the Apostles might have such an
 Assistance as was abundantly suffi-
 cient to answer all the Necessities
 of the Church, without being al-
 ways under the immediate Influ-
 ence of the Holy Ghost, which
 must make them Impeccable as
 as well as Infallible. And even
 in this case we have reason to ad-
 mire God's Providence and Care
 over his Church, for so ordering

it, that *St. Paul* should be upon the place to interpose and put a stop to this ill Conduct, that might else have been of dangerous Consequence, and made a Breach in the Church that would not easily have been made up. And humanely speaking, 'tis not likely that *St. Peter* who had such a Preeminence in the Church, would have yielded to a less Authority than that of *St. Paul's*. From whence too may further appear of what use 'twas even for Inspir'd persons to consult with each other, and act by common Advice: which Point I have explained and proved at large above*.

• P. 38.

a Fr. p.
258, 259.
Eng. p.
72, 73, 74

5. The next Exception I shall take notice of is this: Mr. *N.* tells us ^a, *that the Gift of Wisdom and Knowledge, or the Gift of Prophecy, which he makes all one with the two former, was a Disposition of mind which God sometimes infused into those on whom he bestowed it: whereby they became fit to instruct, and that it did not consist in an im-*
medi-

mediate Inspiration of what they were to say. His reasons for this are two :

1. *Because this Gift might be improved by Study and Reading*, as he proves from 1. Tim. 4. 13, 14. 2. *Because the Apostle gave directions to the Prophets, and order'd them to exercise their Gifts by turns*, to prevent that Confusion which the disorderly Use of their Gifts had brought into the Church ^b. Now he thinks ^b 1 Cor. that if *the Spirit had Inspir'd them* ¹⁴ with what to say, he would likewise have given them directions as to the time and place.

Now methinks he that can confound the Gifts of *Wisdom, Knowledge and Prophecy*, which any Man that consults the place where St. Paul reckons up the several Gifts of the Spirit ^c will see are distinct, ^c 1 Cor. and takes no notice of the Ambiguity of the word *Prophecy*, which is taken in several Senses in Scripture: I say he that confounds things, that any one who has studied the places of Scripture which treat of the Gifts of the Spirit, must needs know to be very different,
need

need not have been so nice as to distinguish between *"a Disposition of mind infus'd into those upon whom God bestowed it, whereby they became fit to Instruct, and an Inspiring them with what to say.* For certainly this *Disposition infused into the mind*, if it mean any thing, must mean God's giving Men a clear and distinct apprehension of what they were to teach others; and I think this is much the same as Inspiring them with what to say, since *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*, and words are only the Expressions of our thoughts: unless our Author supposes, that when God Inspires a Man with what to say, he only puts so many words into his mouth, without conveying any Idea of the things themselves to his mind. But let us proceed to examine his reasons.

As to the First, I see no inconvenience in asserting, that God very often increas'd or withheld his Extraordinary Gifts, in proportion to the Industry of the Possessors.

fessors. For since the Extraordi-
 nary and Ordinary Gifts agree in
 this, that they are both design'd
 to assist our Natural Faculties, not
 to supersede them, and to incou-
 rage our Industry, not to slacken
 it, I can't see why that Rule of
 our Saviour's, *To him that has shall*
be given, and from him that has not,
i. e. does not improve and make a
 good use of what he has, *shall be*
taken away^d, may not be applied to *d*Matth.
 the Extraordinary Gifts as well as *13. 12.*
 to the Ordinary: and why Men
 might not hope God would bestow
 these Gifts upon them in a greater
 degree, as a reward of their In-
 dustry; and might not have rea-
 son to fear he should withdraw
 them, if they took advantage from
 thence to be negligent. And thus
 much seems to be implied in that
 advice of St. Paul^e, *Not to quench* *e* 1 Thess.
the Spirit, viz. that God may be *5. 19.*
 provok'd to take away these Gifts,
 when he sees them abused: or
 Men's sins may render them Un-
 worthy to be the Instruments of
 the holy Spirit. The story of the
Ethio-

f A^ct. 8.

Ethiopian Eunuch who was Reading the Prophet *Isaiah* ^f, and to whom God sent *Philip* to instruct him, may not unfitly illustrate this matter. Perhaps the utmost diligence the *Ethiopian* could use, would never have given him a clear Understanding of that place of the Prophet: but God to reward his Industry, sent him an Inspir'd Interpreter to instruct him in the meaning of it. And in like manner God may reward Men's Natural endeavours to find out the truth, with such degrees of Knowledge as are Supernatural. Nor does his instance of the *Miraculous Gift of curing Diseases*, which he says ^g, can't be increas'd by Application of Mind, come up to our case. For curing Diseases after the manner the Apostles did, is a Power perfectly beyond the Sphere of Humane ability: whereas the Gifts we speak of, being of an Intellectual Nature, are most of them in some measure adequate to the Faculties of the Soul, and in some degree attainable by Industry; so that

g Ubi sup.

that in this case what is Miraculous in one Man, may be Natural in another. For example, the Gift of speaking in a strange Language was Miraculous in the Apostles, but would not be so in a Man that should get the perfect command of the same Language by industry. For the illustration of this point, I will put this case, *viz.* of two men, one of them arriv'd to a good degree of Learning by study, and the other Illiterate: supposing these two to have equal skill in expounding Scripture; this gift would be thought to proceed from Natural causes in the Former, but would be miraculous in the Latter: now putting this Case, 'tis no Incongruity to suppose that God should reward the Industry of the Former with a degree of Infus'd Knowledge, as much above the Supernatural Indowments of the Latter, as his Natural Talents and acquir'd Knowledge are above the others. For my part I can see no absurdity in supposing, that God may encourage Men to improve their Natural Talents as
much

much as they can, by promising them a proportionable increase of Supernatural Knowledge. For this, as has been observ'd before ^h, is God's constant method, to make use of Natural means as far as they will go, and than to supply as much as he thinks fit over and above.

b Supr. p.
37, 38.

2. As to his Second Reason, which is taken from the *Directions the Apostle gives to Spiritual persons*, 1. Cor. 14. tis plain by that very Chapter, that the Spirit usually left Gifted Men to themselves, to exercise their Gifts as they thought fit: for the Apostle tells them ⁱ, *that the Spirits of the Prophets are subject to the Prophets*: and from several places of the same Chapter ^k it appears, that Men spake in Unknown Tongues in their Assemblies, when there was no body present that understood the Language they spake in. Which certainly they would never have done, if they had been under the immediate direction of the Spirit as to the use of their Gifts. And the speaking

i 1 Cor.
14. 32.

k Vers. 5.
12, 13, &c.

[111]

speaking with Tongues Mr. N. himself owns to be a proper kind of Inspiration, but says ' *that when* ^{1 Fr. p. 267.} *they thus abus'd their Gifts they did* ^{Eng. p. 87.} *not speak by immediate Inspiration, but had the same command of those Languages, as if they had Learn'd them from their Infancy:* as if a Supernatural Habit were not as much a Gift, as a single Act. And this likewise shews that the Inspiration of the Gifted Men in the Primitive Church, consisted rather in a constant and permanent Faculty, habitually residing in their mind, and exerting it self, either as they were moved by the Holy Ghost ^{m Act. 4. 8, 31.} or as they themselves thought fit ^{n Act. 17. 16. - 18. 5.}, than in such a kind of Inspiration as the Prophets had, which was often discontinued and interrupted: which was the reason the Latter never spake till they felt a New Impulse, and therefore usher'd in what they were about to say, with *Thus saith the Lord*, and left off when that Impulse ceased. And this difference between the Prophetical Inspiration of the Old Testament, and the Apostolical of the

the New, is a sufficient reason why the Apostles never begin their Exhortations or Instructions, with *Thus saith the Lord*, which yet is thought a good Argument by *Spinoza* ^o against the Inspiration of the Apostolical Writings: tho I think 'tis a very weak one; for the prefixing their Names before their Epistles, gives them sufficient Authority, and a just Title to Inspiration.

^o Theol.
Polit. c. II.

p Fr. p.
251, 252.
Eng. p.
61, 62.

And now I have run through the most considerable Objections which this Author has rais'd against the Inspiration of the Apostles. I think 'tis hardly worth while to spend time in Refuting other little Cavils, as ^p *“that the Apostles never speak with the same Authority as Christ did, but declare they say nothing of themselves, and refer all to Christ: for sure 'tis enough for Disciples to speak in the Name of their Master, and 'tis equivalent to the Phrase of the Prophets, Thus saith the Lord. And the same Argument if it prove any thing, will hold against the Inspiration of Christ himself, because he says,*

^q *My*

^q My doctrine is not mine, but his that ^q John
sent me : and ^r As the Father gave me ^{7. 16.}
Commandment, so I speak. ^{r--12.49,}
^{50.}

Mr. N. multiplies Cavils about
the *Synod of Jerusalem* ^r, some of ^{Fr. p.}
which I have answer'd already, ^{252, 253.}
and have shew'd ^r that there were ^{Eng. p.}
several reasons why the Apostles ^{63, 64.}
should meet together about this ^{r P. 39,}
weighty affair. To which I shall ^{Sec.}
here add one more, *viz.* that they
met thus, to give a President and
be an Example to Future Ages,
of settling Church Affairs by the
Common advice of *Councils* and
Synods.

I shall not pursue all the Critical
Remarks he makes ^u upon the style ^u *Ubi sup.*
of their *Synodical Letter* : for if
their own express words, [*It seem'd*
good to the Holy Ghost and to us] will
not perswade him that the Apo-
stles thought themselves Assisted
with the immediate direction of
the Holy Ghost in that affair, I
despair of convincing him by a-
ny thing I can say. Nor does it
follow from hence, that all the
persons present were inspir'd: for

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since

since the Apostles presided over the Assembly, and the Determination was wholly left to them, if they were Inspir'd, it was sufficient to stamp a Divine Authority upon the Determination it self, tho it were publish'd in the name of the whole Assembly. But 'tis pity the Apostles had not had some such able Critick as our Author among them, to direct them how to word their Epistle, and if Mr. N. had been *Secretary* to the Council, no doubt 'twould have been drawn up with much more Exactness: tho as great a Critick as himself ^x, is of Opinion that ἐν προτάσει in the Conclusion of the Letter, which he finds so much fault with, is for all that a very elegant Expression. He has printed the Close of this Synodical Epistle in great Letters, as if it had something more than ordinary in it, and were a manifest argument of his side; but as Big as the words look, whoever considers them will find there's very little sense in his Application of them.

^x Casaub.
ad Act.
10. 33.

CHAP.

C H A P. III.

*Concerning the Inspiration of the
P R O P H E T S.*

I Do not see much in our Author that reflects upon the Authority or Inspiration of the *Prophets* : But since I am engag'd in the Subject of Inspiration, and those persons who have no great esteem for the Sacred Books, fancy there are many things relating to the Prophets liable to Exception, I think it will not be altogether impertinent or beside my main Design, which is to *Vindicate the Authority of the Holy Writings*, if I take a short View of those Considerations which tend to establish the Authority of the *Prophets*, and to answer some of the most Popular Objections against them. I shall therefore

I. *Consider the Personal Qualifications of the Prophets.*

H 2

II.

II. *I shall consider the chief Design of their Prophecies.*

III. *I shall resolve some Difficulties which relate to the Prophets themselves, or their manner of Writing.*

I. As to the first: 'twould in a great measure take off mens Prejudices against the propheticall Writings, if they would but consider *what manner of men the Prophets were*, and what excellent Qualifications they were indowed with. Men that are glad of any Argument that makes Religion look like a Cheat, think they have a great Advantage against all sorts of Prophecy, because there have been so many Cheats of this kind: and they find that usually the persons that pretend to a prophetick Spirit, are in all other respects of such shallow Intellectuals, and such mean Qualifications, that no wise man would take their Advice in any thing of ordinary concern, and therefore 'tis very unlikely God should make choice of such persons, to be his Messengers and
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the Conveyers of his Will to men. But if they would likewise consider how unlike the Prophets of the Old Testament were to these Pretenders, both as to their *Intellectuals*, and their *Morals*, 'twould go a great way to discover how vastly different they are from each other, and the Truth and Excellency of the one would more evidently appear, by comparing it with the evident marks of Imposture and Meanness, which are found in the other.

As to the *Intellectual Accomplishments* of the true Prophets, they had usually an Ingenuous and liberal Education, as appears by the Institution of the *Schools of the Prophets*, so often mention'd in the History of the *Kings*. And we find 'twas reckon'd a wonder that *Saul* should be among the *Prophets*^a, because he had not been Educated suitably to that Profession. So God's calling *Amos* to this Office from being a *Herds-man*, was extraordinary and unusual, as he himself intimates^b. And indeed the

^a 1 Sam.

10, 11.

-19. 24.

^b Amos

8. 14.

style of the Prophets plainly discovers them to have been Men of a good Education, and therefore the Criticks have all observed what great difference there is between *Amos's* style and that of the other Prophets, which they justly impute to their different Education. *Isaiah's* style is Elegant ^c and Lofty: *Jeremy's* shews him to have been a great Master of *Rhetorick* ^d: *Ezekiel* plainly discovers in his way of writing, great skill in *Architecture* and *Geography*: *Daniel's* Wisdom was so famous even when he was young, that it became a Proverb among the *Chaldeans* to say, *Art thou wiser than Daniel* ^e? And not to descend to any more particulars, we find that all their writings are full of Powerful Exhortations to Vertue, of weighty and Pathetick Representations of the heinousness of those Vices which were then prevailing, and the miseries which would attend them. We find they set forth the absurdity of Pagan Idolatry ^f with great strength and smartness of Argument:

e *Isaia di-*
Elip purif-
simaiter
omnes qui
post Mo-
sen scrip-
serunt, &
ejus inuicem
pulcher-
rime.

Grot. in
If. 50. 4.
d *Mirus*
in affecti-
bis concit-
andis
Jeremias.
Idem.

e *Ezek.*
28. 3.

f If. 40.
18, &c.
= 44. 9, &c

ment: and endeavour to give Men clear and distinct Notions of Gods Spirituality ^g, Unity ^h, Omnipresence ⁱ, Universal Providence, (of which the foretelling how Free Agents will determine themselves, is a signal instance) and Justice in rewarding Men according to their works ^k. They unfold the methods of Providence in disposing of Kingdoms ^l, and making use of wicked Princes, and Nations to be the Instruments of God's Justice in punishing the sins of others ^m. Such discourses don't look like the idle dreams of a Melancholy and disturb'd fancy, but do indeed answer the Character they pretend to. And those Men who will not believe them to be of Divine Original, ought in reason to allow them to be the Product of a settled Judgement: and can't in Justice but grant, that if the Prophets did not foresee what was to come by a Prophe- tical Spirit, yet they made very probable Conjectures by a Natural Sagacity; since the event has so plainly justified a great part of

g If. 40.

12. &c.

h Jer. 10.

11, 12.

If. 44. 6.

i Jer. 23.

23, 24.

If. 66. 1.

k Jer. 18.

7. &c.

Ezek. 13.

l Jer. 25.

m If. 10.

6. &c.

Ezek. 29.

18, 19.

their Predictions. And if they will not be perswaded that God inlightned the minds of the Prophets by an extraordinary Revelation, yet they can't in Justice deny, but that they discourse of the Nature of God and of his Providence, and of the Obedience which he requires, with as great a degree of clearness and certainty, as Men's Natural Faculties can arrive to. And therefore 'tis not without reason that *Origen* does often in his Books against *Celsus* ^a insilt upon this, *That Moses and the Prophets instructed Men in the nature of God and of their duty, much better than the acutest Philosophers among the Heathens.* So malicious and groundless is that pretence of *Spinoza*, where he tells us ^o, that the Prophets did not agree in their Notions about the Nature of God, because forsooth, different Prophets saw different Signs of the Divine Presence. As if they could not distinguish between a *Symbol* of God's Presence, and the Divine Nature it self. And he may as well

^a P. 18.

-177.

-260.

-359.

Ed. Cant.

^o Theol.

Polit. c. 1.

p. m. 21.

well say, that *Moses* took the *Cloudy Pillar* to be God himself: and by the same reason he must conclude, that *Moses* thought the *Cherubims* and the *Cloud* upon the *Mercy-seat*, which he himself order'd to be made, to be God, or at least to resemble his Essence, and then I think he would have been guilty of greater Idolatry than *Aaron* was in making the *Golden Calf*.

2. If we consider the *Moral Indowments* of the Prophets, we shall find their Vertues so extraordinary, that none of the Whistling Pretenders to Prophecy, can in the least compare with them. With what undaunted Courage and Constancy did they reprove the Popular Vices of the times they lived in? Not sparing the Greatest Persons either out of fear or flattery. And if we suppose them to have acted like Men in their Wits, (and ther'es no tolerable reason to suspect the contrary,) we must conclude that nothing but a Sense of their Duty, could prompt them
to

to do this: for they could propose no advantage to themselves by it, but on the contrary were to expect all the scorn and misery which the Angry and Revengeful Temper of wicked Men in Power whom they had offended, could bring upon them. And it could certainly be no pleasure to be continually reproving Men, when there was little or no hopes of reclaiming them: nay when they had not so much Civility as to thank them for their good Intentions, and take the good Advice which they offer'd, kindly at their hands. If it had not been purely out of a principle of Conscience, and that they were *persuaded* of the truth and great Concern of these things, and *therefore spoke*, they might with much more advantage to themselves, have let Men be quiet and go on securely in their sins. Many of their Troubles and Sufferings we find Recorded in their own Books^p, but several other Scripture-Writers^q assure us, that they were generally Martyrs for the truth's

p Jer. 15.
10, &c.
-c. 18. 19.
-20. 1, &c.
-26. 8, &c.
-36. 26.
-37. 15.
-28. 6.
Dan. 6.
Amos 7.
10.
q Matt.
5. 12. -23.
37. Acts
7. 52.
Heb. 11.
36, 37, 38.
v. etiam
1 Kings
19. 10.
Nehem.
9. 26.

truth's sake, and yet none of these Sufferings could prevail with them to retract any thing they had said, or to confess that they had been deluded themselves, or impos'd upon others, and said, *The Lord saith*, tho he had not spoken. *Origin* hath an excellent passage to our present purpose, which I shall here set down at length. He was speaking just before concerning the Heathen Prophets and Priests, that utter'd the Oracles, and then he adds these remarkable words: τῶν δὲ ἐν Ἰσδαίοις Πρφητῶν οἱ μὲν ἄπο πρφητείας καὶ θείας κατακωχῆς, ὡς ἂν σοφοί· οἱ δ' ἄπ' αὐτῆς τῆς πρφητείας φωτισθέντες τὸ νῦν τοῖσιν γεγῆνασιν, αἰρεθέντες ἀπὸ τῆς πρνοιᾶς εἰς τὸ πιστευθῆναι τὸ θεῖον πνεῦμα καὶ τὰς ἀπὸ τῆς λόγος, διὰ τὸ τῆς βίης δυσμήτηρον καὶ σφοδρὰ εὐτονον καὶ ἐλευθέριον, καὶ πάντῃ πρὸς θάνατον καὶ κινδύνος ἀκατάπληκτον· τοῖσιν οὖν καὶ ὁ λόγος αἰρεῖ δεῖν εἶναι τὰς τῆς ὁππότε πᾶσι θεῶν Προφήτας, οἵτινες παύγων ἀπὸ φηναν πῶς Ἀντιόχου καὶ Κορίνθου καὶ Διογένης εὐτονίαν δι' ἀληθείαν γένεσθαι καὶ ἐλευθερίως ἐλέγχειν τὰς ἀμαρτανόντας ἐλιθάσθαι, ἐπείσθαι &c. ex Hebr.

r c. Cel-
sum l. 7.
p. 336.
Ed. Cant.

f deest
vox, f.
supplend.
ἐπιμαρτυροῦν
καὶ σοφ.
vel le-
gend. ἔτι
ἀρῶσαν
προφητίας

11. 37, 38. αὐτὶ ἐφορῶντες τῷ θεῷ καὶ τοῖς ἀρεταῖς τὰ θεῶν, καὶ μὴ βλεπόμενοις ἀνθρώπων καὶ διὰ τὰς χάριν ἀναισθητοῦ. "But as for the Jewish Prophets, some of them were honour'd with Divine Inspiration, as being eminent for Wisdom before, and some of them having their minds inlightned by the very Gift of Prophecy became Wise, being made choice of by Providence, as persons fit to be intrusted with the Divine Spirit and the Dictates of it, by reason of the Inimitable perfections of their Lives, their Boldness, Impartiality, and Courage that could not be daunted by Death or Danger. For reason tells us, that 'twas fit the Prophets of God should be such Men, for Courage and Constancy of mind, that if we should compare the Fortitude of Antisthenes, Crates or Diogenes with theirs, this would look but like Childrens-play to that. And therefore because they spoke the truth, and rebuked Sinners with a great deal of freedom; "they were ston'd, sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the Sword, they wander'd about in sheep-skins and goats-skins, being destitute,

† Heb. 11.
37, 38.

“destitute, afflicted, tormented:
 “they wander’d in deserts, in moun-
 “tains, in dens and caves of the
 “earth, of whom the world was
 “not worthy: *Having their minds
 always fixed upon God, and upon the
 invisible things which are with him,
 which cannot be discern’d by Sense and
 therefore are Eternal.*

A little after the same Author has these words to the same purpose, Διόπερ ἐν ἑδένι τιθέμεθα λόγων τὰ ὑπο τῆς Πυθίας ἢ ὑπο μυρίων ἄλλων λεγομένων ἱεροσώπων εἰρημένα· τί δ’ ὑπο τῶν ἐν Ἰσδαία προφητεύοντων τηρητέον, ὁρῶντες ὅτι ἅγιος ἦν αὐτῶν ὁ ἔρως μένος καὶ εὐτονία καὶ σεμνὸς βίος πνεύματι· θεὸς τρέπων προφητεύσασιν καὶ νῶ, καὶ ἑδέν ἐχοντι ὡραπλίσιον τῆς ἀπὸ δαιμόνων μαλείας. *We, saith he, do not value the Pythian or any other of the fam’d Heathen Oracles, yet we reverence the Prophets that were amongst the Jews, because we see that the unshaken Courage and Constancy of their Lives, made them worthy to receive the Spirit of God, that prophecied quite another way, and had nothing in it like the Oracles*

cles which the Devils utter'd.

From what has been said we may conclude, That if we consider the Prophets with relation to their *personal Qualifications* only, they will appear to be persons of unquestionable Credit, since their Intellectual Accomplishments were such, that they could not probably be deceived themselves, and the Integrity of their Lives was so great, that we cannot suppose they had any Design to impose upon others. I proceed in the

II. *Place to consider the chief Aim and Design of God's sending Prophets to the Jews, and what was the principal End of their Office.*

^u Deut.
18. 15.

I confess I am apt to believe that the occasion of Gods promising to send a succession of Prophets to the Jews, (as many Learned men understand that place ^u of *Deuteronomy*) was, That they might have no Temptation to have recourse to the Heathen Oracles and Soothsayers, to know what should come to pass, for want of Prophets of their own. Thus much
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the words of *Moses* seem to imply, ^x *There shall not be any among you that useth Divination, or an Observer of times, or an Enchanter; —for these nations whom thou shalt possess hearkened to Observers of times and to Diviners, but as for thee the Lord thy God hath not suffer'd thee so to do. The Lord thy God shall raise thee up a Prophet of thy Brethren, like unto me, unto him shall ye hearken.* The promise of a Prophet, which tho it eminently relate to the *Messias*, yet the Context shews it was primarily and immediately meant of an order of Prophets that should succeed *Moses*: this promise I say, was given to the Jews, as appears from this place, to prevent their applying themselves to the Heathen pretenders to Prophecy. This is *Origen's* Observation upon this place, ^y and he adds this judicious remark. *Therefore*, saith he, *when the nations round about the Jews had their Oracles and several ways of Divination, all which were strictly prohibited among the Jews, if they had not had the satisfaction of*

x Ibid. 2
v. 10 2d
v. 15.

y L. 1. c.
Celsum.
p. 28. Ed.
Cant.

fore-

foreknowing things to come some way or other, it had been almost impossible, considering the great Curiosity of humane nature, to have kept them from despising the Law of Moses, as having no mark of Divinity upon it, or rejecting the Prophets who succeeded him, and taking no care to preserve their Discourses; or else apostatizing to the Heathen Oracles, or setting up something like them among themselves. Therefore 'tis no wonder that the Prophets now and then gave answers to those that enquir'd of them about ordinary Accidents, as Samuel told Saul that his asses were found, and Ahijah the Prophet ^a foretold the death of Jeroboam's son. Or else how could they that stood up for the Law of Moses reprove them that went to consult Idols, as we find Elias ^b reprov'd Ahaziah, saying, Is it because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to enquire of Baalzebub the God of Ekron? Thus far that excellent Writer. Which words of his as they give us a very good account of the original Institution of Prophets among the Jews,

^a 1 Sam.

10. 2.

^a 1 King.

14. 12.

^b 2 King.

1. 3.

Jews, and likewise furnish us with a very satisfactory Reason, why the Prophets condescended now and then to satisfy people's demands about private and trivial Concerns, which seem to be below the Dignity of God's Prophets to meddle with: so I don't question, but God had some further design in Instituting a Succession of Prophets, and charging the people to have a regard to what they should deliver, than meerly to satisfy the Jews Curiosity, or prevent their seeking to Idols for the Knowledge of Futurities. And I suppose that the Institution of Prophets was design'd chiefly for these Three ends.

1. *To admonish the people of their Duty, and press them to practise it, by proposing God's Mercies and Judgements, according as they have behaved themselves.*

2. *To keep up a Sense of God's Providence in their minds.*

3. *To foretell the times of the Messiah, and prepare Men's minds for the Reception of Him.*

1. *The first part of the Prophetical Office was to admonish the people of their Duty, and persuade them to practise it, by setting before them God's Mercies or Judgements, which they would suddenly feel, according as they behaved themselves.*

The Prophets were principally intended to be *Preachers of Righteousness*, and generally speaking, foretold future events only in order to make their Exhortations successful. And with respect to this part of the Prophetical Office, we find the words *Prophet* and *Prophecy* used in the New Testament for instructing Men in their Duty^c.

^c Acts
15. 31.
Rom. 12.
1 Cor. 6.
14. 1, &c.
^d Malac.
2. 7.

Without question 'twas properly the Priests business to instruct the people in their Duty, and they were to *seek the Law at their mouths*^d: but the refractory temper of the Jews, made them despise the ordinary Methods of Reproof and Correction, and their dulness withal made it necessary for God to awaken them out of their sins, sometimes by an Extraordinary Call from Heaven: by sending persons upon

upon a particular Message to them, and giving Testimony to their Divine Mission by some Sign or Wonder: (which I suppose was generally the *Kermis* or Trial of a true Prophet, of which more hereafter) and all this to reinforce the Promises and Threatnings contain'd in the Law of *Moses*, and assure the Jews he would be as good as his word, and they should quickly find, that as if they would amend their ways, *there should not fail one word of all his good Promises*, so if they persisted in their ill courses, *all the Evils that were written in the Law of Moses, should suddenly come upon them and overtake them*. And in this respect, the Prophecies of the Old Testament differ very much from all the False Pretences to Prophecy, that in the Former, future Events are not foretold meerly to please Men's Curiosity, but only in order to the making them better; whereas the Latter do not make it any part of their concern to awaken Men to a sense of God's Overruling Providence and Justice,

or of the ill Consequences that attend Vice when it grows Predominant: and have no other design but meerly to gratifie that Itching desire Men have to be prying into the secrets of Futurity: which is a piece of Knowledge that of it self will do Men more harm than good, and which God upon that account Conceals for the most part from Men, or if he Reveals it, yet he does it by dark and Imperfect Hints on purpose: the reasons of which we shall discourse of more at large in the next Chapter. Now as God made the promoting of Vertue and Holiness the principal design of his sending the Prophets, with respect to those particular persons to whom he sent them: so we find accordingly, that they bestowed their pains and labour chiefly upon this Subject, to perswade Men to *break off their sins by Repentance, and to cease to do evil and learn to do well.* Witness those Pathetick Dissuasives from Sin, and Exhortations to Vertue, which make up far the greater part of
of

of their Writings: in which they discover such a Spirit of Piety and Holiness, as is far above the Rudiments of the Law, and approaches very near to the perfection of the Gospel. But of this more by and by.

2. *The second design of God's Instituting the Prophetical Office, was to keep up a sense of God's Providence in Men's minds.*

The Jews were none of the Acutest or best Temper'd people in the World, and perhaps the greatest Wisdom and Integrity would have been little enough to make them keep firm to the belief of the True God, the sole Creator and Governour of all things, when the whole World beside was given up to Idolatry. For as strong and prevalent as Truth is, yet 'tis in danger of being overpower'd by Multitude; nay, Singularity makes Truth it self look Suspicious, and Men are apt to think 'tis more likely a Few should be mistaken than a great Many. Upon this account 'twas necessary, that God should

sometimes Reinforce the Doctrine of his Universal Providence and Government upon the minds of the Jews, by an Extraordinary Method: and by laying open the secrets of his Providence, and shewing them first what should befall themselves, if they did not repent, and then their Neighbours; convince them that he was the Supreme Lord and Governour of the World, and the Kingdoms of it were at his disposal. 'Tis further to be consider'd, that when the Jews saw how much greater and more flourishing the Neighbouring Kingdoms of *Affyria* and *Egypt* were, than their own, this was a likely Argument to make an Impression upon them, that judg'd of God's *Love or Hatred by what they saw before them*; this might make them imagine, that some other Being had a great share in managing Affairs below beside their God, and tempt them to conclude, that since the God whom they worshipped was not so kind to his servants, as the Heathen Gods were

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to their Votaries, either he was not so able, or not so willing to reward his Worshippers, as the Deities of their Neighbouring Countries were. And 'tis probable that in the Latter times of the Jewish Kingdom, when their Enemies made frequent Incurfions into their Country, and threatned intirely to subdue it, and at length did so, 'twas a temptation to many of the Jews to forsake the True God, and turn to Idols, because they saw 'twas better with their Worshippers than with those of True God^e. For these reasons 'twas e see Jer. 44. 17, 18. fit that God should often give this Dull and Unthinking people fresh Assurances that all things were at his disposal, that 'twas in his power to make them Happy or Miserable, and that they must expect to be one or t'other, according as they observ'd or neglected his Commands. And tho it might be sufficient for this design, to have given them the Predictions of such things only as were to come to pass in their own times; yet God

was pleas'd to discover to his Prophets what should come to pass in the *Latter days*: both to honour them with the prospect of that glorious Scene of things, which he had reserv'd till *the Fulness of time should come*, and give them a fore-taste of the Joys they were to expect in the *Messias's* Heavenly kingdom, by discovering to them some part of the Happiness of his Earthly one: and likewise to give a convincing Proof to all Ages, that he was the *First and the Last*, the sole Orderer and Disposer of all things, that when the things themselves should come to pass, men might say, *This hath God done, and might perceive that 'tis his work*. And this leads me to consider the

3. *The third thing which God intended in the Institution of the Prophetical Office, which was to foretell the times of the Messias, and to prepare men's minds for the Reception of him.*

And indeed to give men notice of these things, was God's principal design in sending the Prophets,

phets, and the coming of the *Messias* was what God spake by the mouth of his holy Prophets ever since the world began. And since God seems to have made this the principal part of the Prophetical Office, I shall consider it as carefully as I can, and shall inquire,

1. First, *For what Reasons God thought fit to reveal this so often and so particularly.*

2. *I shall consider the manner how the Prophets delivered this Prophecy.*

1. As to the first, we may assign two reasons why God reveal'd this so often and so particularly.

1. *To shew that this was the Master-piece of his Providence, if I may so speak, what he had an eye upon in all his particular dispensations toward the Jews, and what he design'd as the ultimate End and Completion of them all.*

2. *To wean the Jews by degrees from the Carnal Institutions of the Law, and by discovering to them a Better State than that they were under, to raise their minds to Spiritual and Heavenly*

venly things, and thereby prepare them for the reception of the Messias.

1. As for the first of these Reasons ; it seems as if God design'd to raise mens Expectations , and make them look upon this as the great Master-piece of his Power and Wisdom , when he made the coming of the *Messias* the common Theme of all the Prophets, *Mystically* implid it in all the Promises, and *Typically* represented it not only in the Ceremonies of the Law , but also in the Lives and Actions of the Eminent Persons among the Jews in all Ages. What God himself lays so much Strefs upon, men ought to regard as something more than an ordinary work of Providence : and surely the Prophets had Great and Noble Ideas of it, since they seem to Vye with each other, who shall excel the rest in setting forth its Glories to the best Advantage, and by the most Emphatical and Lively Representations, with respect to the Capacity of the People to whom they were to publish

lish those glad Tidings. If the *Messias* had come into the World without any Notice given of it before hand, the Unexpectedness of it would indeed have caus'd Surprize and Wonder, but it would not have been look'd upon as an effect of the *determinate Counsel and Foreknowledge of God*, and of that Πολυμικαλῶς Σοφία which foreordain'd this *before the Foundation of the world*, and made all the lesser Dispensations of Providence subservient to this great End, and by Various methods and Different measures pursu'd the same Uniform Design.

f Eph. 3.

10.

v. Grot. in locum.

2. The second Reason I assign'd why the coming of the *Messias* did bear so great a part in the Prophe-tical Predictions, was *to wean the Jews by degrees from the Legal Ceremonies and Institutions*: and by discovering to them a Better Covenant than that they were under, to raise their Minds to Spiritual and Heavenly things, and thereby prepare them for the Reception of the *Messias*.

I look upon it as a certain Truth, that God instituted a great part

part of the Ceremonial Law with respect to the Opinions that were generally receiv'd at the time when it was enacted, and in compliance with the Rites that the Nations of the World used in the Worship of their Gods^d: that so by this Condescension, he might check that hankering after the Religious Rites of the Nations round about them, which the Jews upon all occasions discover'd to be in their Temper. 'Tis upon this account, that St. Paul calls the Ceremonial Law the *Elements of the world*^h, and *weak and beggerly Elements*ⁱ. But 'tis true withal, that God in his Wisdom so contrived it, that these Rudiments which were taken from the Rites and Usages of the Heathen world, were to the Jews the Rudiments or first Beginnings of Christianity, according to what the same Apostle says, that *the Law was our Schoolmaster*^k. It was indeed like the first Rudiments of Learning, which young Beginners at first do not know the use of, but

g v. *Maimonid.*
More
Nevoch.
Par. 3.
c. 32.
p. 432.

^h Gal. 4.
ⁱ ³ Ib. v. 9.

^k Gal. 3.
24

but when they are gone on a pretty way, then they find those Beginnings made the way easier for that which comes after. And in like manner, tho the Jews understood not at first God's Design in prescribing so many several kinds of Expiation for sin, yet when the *way to the Holiest by the Blood of Christ* was laid open, then they might easily discover, that all those different Rites were design'd to represent that one Sacrifice of the *Lamb of God* which was offer'd for the Sins of the World. And as God thus complied with the Ignorance of the Jews in that state of Non-age, and fed them like Children, *with milk and not with meat*, with such Instructions as were suitable to their Capacities: so he reveal'd this Great and Ultimate End of the Law, by gentle and easie degrees, as they were able to Bear it. He first discovered it faintly under the shadows of the Law, which seem'd by their own Weakness and Imperfection to aim at something more perfect
than

than themselves. But then by the Prophets God manifested this grand Intention of his more clearly : by them he gave large and distinct Predictions of a New and Better State of things to come, of a *New Covenant, establish'd upon Better Promises*, and consisting of more Excellent Precepts^l : that God's Kingdom should be enlarg'd, and *all Nations should flow unto it^m* : than *he would take Priests and Levites out of other Nationsⁿ*, and in *every place Incense should be offer'd to him and a pure Offering*. And in order to prepare men's minds for this New State, the Prophets often speak after a slighting manner of the Levitical Rites and Ceremonies^p, and press men to the Practice of the Weightier matters of the Law, *Judgment, Mercy and the Love of God* : and require inward Purity of heart^q, instead of outward Ceremonial Worship. Which is such a pitch of Perfection in obedience, as *Moses's Law* seldom recommends : for indeed that was chiefly design'd to be a Political Law,

1 Jer. 31.
31.

m Is. 2. 2.

n -66. 21.

o Mal. 1.
11.

p Is. 1. 11.
Ec.

-66. 3.

Jer. 7. 22,
23.

Hos. 6. 6.

Amos 5.

21 -24.

Micah 6.

6, 7, 8.

q Ezek.

18. 31.

Law, instituted for the Government of the Jewish Commonwealth, and therefore as all Political Laws are, 'tis more careful to restrain Men from the *Overt-Acts* of Sin, than to make them sincerely and Inwardly Good. In which respect St. Paul says *that the Law* r. 1. Tim. 1. 9. *was not made for a Rule to the Righteous, but for a Restraint to the Lawless and Disobedient.* And therefore the Prophets by refining upon the Law, and exhorting Men to *fulfil the Righteousness of the Law, by walking not after the Flesh but after the Spirit,* did contribute very much toward the preparing Men's minds for the times of the Messias; as they wean'd them from the overfondness they had to the Levitical Rites, by shewing them a more excellent way to please God: and as they gave them to understand, that God did not design the Mosaical Covenant to be Perpetual, but that that it should at last give way to a Better. And these discourses which the Prophets made to the Jews, together with

*f Prophe-
ta omnes
Egregii
ad Evan-
gelium
Duces.
Grot. in
Jer. 7. 9.*

with the several Afflictions God brought upon them, both in the Captivity and afterward, on purpose to take off their minds from the Temporal Promises, and make them look up to Spiritual and Heavenly Ones, had so great an effect upon the generality of that People, that in the latter times we find their Writers discourse of the Nature of Religion in a style much more agreeable to the Spirit of the Gospel, than they used formerly, as appears by the *Book of Ecclesiasticus*: and speak of a Future State with much greater Clearness and Assurance, as may be seen in the Dying Speeches of the *Maccabees* ¹, and in several other parts of the *Apocryphal Writings* ². And all this contributed very much to raise in the minds of the Jews that Expectation of the *Messias*, which we find the generality of them had at the time of our Saviour's Coming ³. I proceed to consider

2. *The manner how the Prophets deliver'd this Prophecy*, and that was Twofold,

1. *There*

¹ 2 Macc.

² Wisd. 3.

³ Eccl. 5.

Tob. 3. 6.

³ John

1. 20, 21.

² 7. 40, 41.

Luke 2.

38. - 3. 15.

1. *There were some Prophecies which in the Proper, Literal and Primary meaning related to Christ, and can't in any Tolerable Sense be applied to any other.*

2. *Others, tho' in their Literal and Direct sense, they foretold some other Event which was nearer at hand, yet had a further and Mystical sense contain'd in them, which related to Christ and his Kingdom.*

1. Concerning the First sort, I need not say much, for they are but few in Comparison with those of the Second, but are withal so plain, that all the Art of the Adversaries of Christianity has not been able to avoid the force of them, or wrest them to any other sense, but what the Christians give of them. *Origen* is very copious upon this Subject^x, and proves at large that several Texts of Scripture, never were fulfill'd in any person but our Saviour. The Instances he gives are *Gen.* 49. 10. *Mich.* 5. 2. *Isaiah* c. 52. and 53. *Psalms* 45. To which we may add, *Dan.* 9. 24, &c. *Psalms* 110. *Psalms*

xv. Cels.
l. i. p. 39,
&c.

22. 16, 18. — 69. 21. The greatest difficulties concern the Second sort of Prophecies, which have a double sense, Literal and Mystical, for the explaining of which I shall lay down these following Observations.

1. *That most of the Prophecies concerning Christ have a double sense, Literal and Mystical.*

2. *That those Prophecies concerning Christ, which do Directly point at something which happen'd before the time of our Saviour, yet have some evident Marks in them, which shew that they have some Further meaning than that which was first intended.*

3. *That there are several very good Reasons upon which this Opinion of a Double sense in the Prophets, Literal and Mystical is grounded.*

1. The First Observation I lay down is, *That most of the Prophecies concerning Christ have a Double sense, Literal and Mystical.*

Now to avoid all Cavilling about words, I shall first premise that by the Literal sense, I mean that which the Prophet more immediately

ately intended, and which pointed at some Event that was nearer the Prophets own time, than the Mystical Completion was: and by the Mystical sense I understand, that which had a respect to the times of the Gospel, tho sometimes this Latter sense is more properly express'd by the words, and more agreeable to their Natural Import than the former, as we shall see presently. Having premised this, I proceed to shew that *there is a Literal as well a Mystical sense in most of the Prophecies relating to Christ.*

Without allowing this we shall make great Confusion and Disorder in the Prophetical Writings, if we suppose them to break off Abruptly from the matter in hand, and without any visible Transition go to a quite different Subject. And this is, to speak more particularly, very unreasonable to suppose in the Prophet *Isaiah*, who as he is most eminent for the clearness of his Prophecies concerning the Messias, so he is as remarkable

y Chap. 7.
c. 36-37.
-39.

for the Regular Order and Texture of his Prophecies, and their Coherence one with another. And the Historical Relations which he intersperses in his Writings^y, serve as a Key to open the Primary and Literal Intention of his whole Prophecy. But the Beauty of it taken all together, will be quite spoil'd, except we suppose him in most Cases to have some regard to the Subject he is upon, and rather to take Hints from thence to discourse concerning the state of the Gospel, than to fly out into a Foreign Subject without any Respect to Order or Coherence. The wonderful Restauration of the Jewish Nation and Deliverance out of their Captivity, gave a very fit occasion to the Prophet to foretell at the same time, that Great Salvation which Christ the Redeemer of *Israel* should Accomplish, and was a proper Representation of our Saviour's giving *Light to the Gentiles who sat in darkness, and*^a *proclaiming liberty to the Captives* of Sin and Satan. And

a Isaiah
61. 1.

ac-

accordingly the Prophet pursues this with a pompous Eloquence from the 40th. Chapter, almost to the end of his Prophecy. But yet there's no reason to think, that he was so intent upon this Latter Subject, as quite to forget the Former: for he was not only an Evangelical Prophet, but likewise knew how to *speake a word in season* ^a *to him that was weary* ^a under oppression and exile, and *preach deliverance to the Captives* of Israel. ^a *Isaiah 50. 4.*

But I shall give a more evident Instance of this, in that Famous Prophecy of his, ^b *Behold a Virgin* ^b *shall conceive, &c.* ^b *Isaiah 7. 14.* It appears by the beginning of the Chapter, that the occasion of this Prophecy was *Abaz's* fear of the Kings of *Syria* and *Israel*, and his distrust of God's delivering him out of that distress. Upon which the Prophet gives the King his choice of *asking any sign* of God ^c as a pledge of his Deliverance: and upon his refusing to name any, which he did rather out of Despair ^d, than a ^d *ver. 13.* modest Unwillingness to prescribe

to God ; the Prophet by God's order gives him this Sign, *A virgin shall conceive*, &c. Now 'tis plain both by the Occasion and the Intent of God's giving this Sign, that the words must in their primary and Immediate sense, relate to something which should come to pass very Shortly, or else how could it be an assurance to *Abaz* of a speedy Deliverance ? For I pray, what sense would there be in such words as these, " I assure you of a speedy Deliverance, by the same Token that above 700. years hence the Messias shall be born of a Virgin ? The use of a Sign is to go before the thing signified, not to come after it, at least not to keep such a distance behind it. Whereas if we suppose the First intended sense of this Prophecy to be this, " that before one who " is now a Virgin can bear a Son, " and that child come to some degrees of Understanding, and know " *how to refuse the evil and choose the good* ", God will deliver *Abaz* : the intent and meaning of the Prophecy

phcey perfectly answers the occasion of it, and exactly agrees with the scope of the Context from the 16th verse of this, to the latter end of the *next Chapter*. This Prophecy I thought fit to treat of at large, because it makes out the Double sense of Prophecies which I contend for so clearly: for there are as evident Marks of its being intended further than its Primary sense and design, as there are of the Primary sense it self, as I shall shew by and by.

I shall only just mention two or three Prophecies more, which plainly and at first sight, imply a Literal sense distinct from the Mystical. The first shall be that of *Hosea*, ' *Out of Egypt have I call'd* f Hof. 11.
my Son, which was certainly first ^{1.}
 meant of God's delivering the *Israelites* out of the *Egyptian* ^{g See} *Bondage*. Another instance is that of *Exod. 4.*
Jeremy, ^h *In Ramah was there a voice* 22, 23.
heard, Rachel weeping for her children, &c. h Jer. 31
 which without question was first spoken of the Captivity of *Benjamin* by *Nebuchadnezer*. The 15.

1 Pſal. 41.
9.

laſt I ſhall mention is that of the Pſalmiſt, *He that eats of my bread hath magnified himſelf againſt me*, which was originally ſpoken by *David* concerning ſome of his own ſervants, who combin'd againſt him in *Absalom's* Conſpiracy. Many others of the ſame nature might be alledg'd^k.

2 Sam.
7. 14.
Pſal. 72.
*109.

2. My ſecond Obſervation is, *That the Prophecies which have a Literal ſenſe beſide the Myſtical, yet have evident Marks that ſomething further is deſign'd by them than what is contain'd in the Literal ſenſe.*

Tho we allow that many of thoſe Prophecies which the Writers of the New Teſtament quote as irrefragable Proofs of Chriſtianity, pointed Directly and Immediately at ſome thing that came to paſs before: yet if we examine them thoroughly, we ſhall find that generally ſpeaking, the Primary and Literal ſenſe does not come up to the full Force and Import of the Words, but that they imply much more than can be true of the things or perſons which
were

were first intended : from whence we may conclude that they have a Regard to something further, in which they are properly Verified and Fulfill'd. As to instance in the Prophecy before mention'd, *Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son*: who does not see that the first Sense and Completion, viz. *One that is now a Virgin shall marry and bear a Son*, comes infinitely short of the full Force and true Meaning of the words ? and therefore they certainly look further than their first intended Sense. So there are several Prophecies in which some of the most Remarkable Passages were never fulfill'd in the Persons of those concerning whom they were first spoken : as those Passages in *David's Psalms*,
They pierced my hands and my feet, / *Psal. 22.*
they parted my garments, and cast 18, 19.
lots upon my vesture. ^m *They gave me* m *If. 69.*
gall to eat, and vinegar to drink, were 21.
 never, that we can find, literally true of *David*, tho 'tis likely Both those Psalms were at first pen'd by him with regard to his own Circum-

cumstances. In short, let any man compare the Literal Sense of the Prophecies relating to Christ, as 'tis Explain'd by *Grotius*, (who has took more pains to Clear this Matter than any other Expositor) with the Mystical, and he will find that generally speaking, the Primary or Literal Sense does not come up to the full Import and Meaning of the Words: but looks Narrow and Forc'd in many places, in comparison of the Mystical. From whence 'twill appear that the Prophecies which are applied by the Apostles to Christ and the Gospel, are not wrested from their Natural Sense, nor applied only by way of *Accommodation*, (as some men love to speak, and Mr. N. ⁿ seems to be of the same mind) just as men apply the Sentences of an Author to quite different purposes from what he at first intended by it, and as *Homer's* and *Virgil's* Verses have been made use of to express such things as never came into their thoughts.

* Fr. p.
227.
Eng. p.
22, 23.

3. The third Observation I lay down is, *That there are several good Reasons upon which this Opinion of a Literal and Mystical Sense in Prophecies is grounded.*

1. *To suppose a Double Sense in the Prophetical Writings, is to suppose them writ in a style agreeable to that of the Law, and suitable to the Rude and Carnal apprehensions of Religion which prevailed among the Jews. They always lookt upon the Law as containing something Mysterious and Divine, under the Obvious and common Sense of it. This the Psalmist acknowledg'd, when he pray'd that God would Open his eyes, that he might behold wondrous things out of his Law^o: and St. Paul when he calls the Rites and Ceremonies of the Law, the Shadows and patterns of Heavenly things^p, a Figure or Parable^q for the time then present, and the shadow of good things to come^r.*

This Mystical way of expressing and representing things was in Vogue among the Wise Men of the First Ages in the World, and received in the Religious Rites and Mysteries

^o Psal. 119.

18.

^p Hebr. 3.

5.

^q 9. 23, 24.

^r Παροι-
βαια.

Heb. 9. 9.

^r Heb. 10.

1.

*SV. Clem.
Alexand.
Strom. l.
§. per tot.
2 P. 140.*

ries of all the Ancient, especially the Eastern Nations^t. And therefore God, who, as has been observed already^t, adapted the Mosaical Institutions to the Opinions and Customs already receiv'd in the world, thought fit so to contrive the Ceremonial part of the Law, that the more remarkable Rites and Usages of it should be a shadow of Spiritual and Heavenly things: and by this means suited it both to the Greatest and Meanest Capacities; retaining the latter in a sense of their Duty, by the Gaudiness and External Pomp of his Service, which struck and affected their Senses; and imploying the Inquisitive in the search of those Spiritual and Heavenly things, which were wrapt up in Figures and Shadows, and were the *Wisdom of God hid in a Mystery*. And as the Diligence of Industrious persons, and those who were Lovers of Truth, was sufficiently rewarded with the finding out of these *Deep things* of God which were hid under a Vail, so the Slothfulness of Carnal

Carnal and Worldly Men and their Contempt of Divine Truths, was punish'd by leaving them in Ignorance, with the Veil still drawn over the Rites and Institutions of the Law, so that they could not look to the Ultimate End and Design of it. Which is the very Reason our Saviour gives, why he spake to the multitude in Parables, *Matth. 13. 11, &c.* where he tells his Disciples, that they who would not be at any pains in the search of the Truth, when it concerns their Souls, do not deserve to know it: whereas the Disciples that were careful Hearers of what Christ said unto them, were Rewarded with the *Knowledge of the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.*

But to return: Since the Law had its double Meaning and Aspect, 'twas reasonable that the Prophets should have so too. The Jews having been used to this way of Instruction would expect it: the Reasons why God used it before, were the same still; for the Jewish

Jewish Nation, to whom the Prophets were sent, was the same Carnally minded people they ever were, their Thoughts were not much affected with any thing but Temporal Blessings, and therefore 'twas necessary to set forth the Glories of the *Messiah's* Kingdom, by the splendid Representations of Worldly Grandeur, which being a Happiness that they understood and valued, might serve to raise in their dull and earthly Minds, some Desire and Expectation of his Coming. Whereas if the nature of his Kingdom had been set forth plainly as it was in it self, the Spiritual Glories of it were too Refin'd for them to understand, they would have been *far above out of their sight*, and if they had seen some Glimpse of them, yet they would have discover'd no *Beauty in them that they should desire them*. 'Tis for this Reason the Prophets set forth the State of the Gospel, by the Representation of such things as were in Use among the Jews, and were most Glorious and Excellent
in

in their Eyes to whom they wrote. So *Isaiah* expresses the Conspicuousness of Christ's Kingdom, and the Figure it was to make in the World, by saying that the *Mount of the Lord's House shall be establish'd upon the top of the mountains* ^u. And ^u *Is.* 2. 1. both he and the Prophet *Zachary* describe the Conversion of the Gentiles, by the *Nations going up to Jerusalem to worship there, and keep the solemn Feasts* appointed by the Law ^x, because Worshipping ^x *Is.* 66. at *Jerusalem*, was the highest Notion of Religious Worship which ^{20. 23.} *Zech.* 14. the Jews could apprehend. For ^{16.} the same Reason 'twas necessary, that the Temporal Deliverances which were wrought by those persons, whom God rais'd up to be Saviours to the Jews in their Distress, should be the Types and Figures of that great Salvation which the *Messias* was to purchase : and therefore 'twas fit that the Prophets should joyn both together in their Writings, and make use of the Former to Illustrate the Latter by.

2. *God's making the Great Persons and remarkable Actions of Former Ages, the Types and Figures of what should come to pass in the Latter days, the times of the Messias, is as I observed before* ^a, *an Argument that God made all his Dispensations subservient to this one Great Design, and made all the different Lines of his Providence meet in this one Center. Which shews that the Coming of Christ was the End of the Law and the Prophets, and the Eternal Purpose which God purposed with himself before the World began. And accordingly St. Paul says* ^b, *that all things happen'd to the Jews as Types* ^c *of what should come to pass under the Gospel. And therefore he* ^d *and likewise St. Peter* ^e, *speak of the Deluge and the Israelites passing thro the Red Sea, as Types of Baptism: he argues from Jacob and Esau, Isaac and Ishmael* ^f, *as Prefigurations of the Rejection of the Jews and the Calling of the Gentiles. And several other Allegorical Applications of the Rites and Histories of the Old Testament,*

to

^a P. 138,
139.

^b 1 Cor.

10. 11.

^c Τύποι

τυπικαί

τύποις.

^d 1 Cor.

10. 2.

^e 1 Pet. 3.

20, 21.

^f Rom. 9.

6, &c.

Gal. 4. 27,

&c.

to the times of the New, are to be found in the Apostolical Writings. Which kind of Interpretations are not so Precarious as some are apt to imagine, since besides that the Divine Assistance did certainly accompany these Expositors, and that this way of Interpreting Scripture was allowed by the Jews, for whose use the Writings of the Apostles were immediately and principally design'd: I say besides these Considerations, the Expositions themselves of this kind may be reduced to Fixt Rules and Principles, the chief of which are these two: the First, that which I mention'd just now out of St. Paul 8: g 1 Cor. the Second is this, viz. *Whatever* 10. 11. *Priviledges belong'd to the Jews as the Segullah or Peculiar People of God, do in a more Eminent manner belong to the Christian Church, which is the Mystical Israel* ^h. Which Rules if Men would have a regard to, and take Directions from the Mystical Interpretations of the Old Testament which are to be found in the Writings of the Apostles, ^h See 1 Pet. 2. 9. compar. with Exod. 19. 5. 6. and Deut. 7. 6. 1 Cor. 9. 13. 14.
L twould

'twould keep them from indulging their Fancies too much in these Expositions, and thereby making the Sense of Scripture Precarious, which are the usual Objections against this way of Expounding it, and to which many Men's Expositions of this kind are liable.

3. *A third Reason why the Prophecies should have a Mystical Sense as well as a Literal, may be taken from the Nature and Use of Prophecy in general, which makes it requisite that Prophecies should be deliver'd with some degree of Obscurity:* and therefore the Involving a Mystical sense within a Literal One, is a proper Style for a Prophetical Writing, where the matters spoken of ought not to be express'd in too plain words. I deny not but there are some plain Prophecies in Scripture, but as much the greater part of them have something of Obscurity, so I doubt not but to make it appear, that the Obscurity of the Prophecies is so far from being an Objection against them, as some pretend, that on the contrary, 'tis
ab-

absolutely requisite that most Prophecies should be Obscure, or else they would not answer the Designs for which they were given, nor be Accomplish'd in a way agreeable to the Methods of Providence. But of this in the next Chapter.

The Sum of what I have hitherto said concerning the Authority of the Prophetical Writings is this ; That if we consider the Prophets only as men, that were the Teachers of Vertue and Religion, the least that can be said of them is, That in respect of their great Improvements in the several parts of Knowledge, the Excellency of their Precepts, the Integrity of their Lives, their Contempt of the World, and constant Adhering to their Principles, they were equal to the greatest *Philosophers* : but if we consider them as Inlightned from above, and the Messengers of God to the world, they discover to us the Various Methods of the Divine Government, they unravel the In-

tricate Turnings and Windings of that Dark Labyrinth, they display the Scene of Providence, from the Beginning of this World to the End, and then give us a Prospect of Another to come: the Signal Accomplishment of their Predictions already fulfilled, confirms our Belief in Providence, and encourages us to trust in God, and in the Words of his Prophets for the Future. They do not open the Scene of things to come, only to gratify a Vain Curiosity, or with a Design to encourage the Belief of a Fatal Necessity, but to assure us that God interests himself in the Government of the World, that all things are Guided by his Unerring Hand, and that the Changes which come to pass in the World, are not the Effects of Blind Chance or Surly Fate, but the Results of Infinite Wisdom and Goodness, which is able to bring Good out of Evil, and make the Rage and *Fierceness*, the Folly and Madness of man *turn to God's Praise*, and be Instrumental

tal in bringing about his Great Purposes and Designs. Thus the Holy Prophets teach us to depend upon God, and acknowledge that *our Sufficiency is of him*, and yet withal to believe that 'tis in our own Power in a great measure, whether we will be Happy or Miserable. Thus their Doctrine promotes God's Honour, without superseding men's Diligence and Indebours, and instructs us to give him the Glory when we do well, and not to *charge him foolishly*, when we do amiss.

And as to their way of Writing, which includes a Hidden and Mysterious Sense under a Literal and Obvious one, this was agreeable to the Method of Instruction which the great Sages of the world practis'd in those early Ages: 'twas what the Jews had been accusom'd to, what they always believ'd to be the Style of Scripture, and do so still, tho it make against them; it tends to discover the Chain of Providence, and the Dependance which by

the Appointment of the Divine Wisdom, the Occurrences of one Age have upon those of another which is at a great distance. The Prophets themselves have in most Cases, left us Certain Marks to know where we are to seek for Mysteries, and a Key to unlock their true Meaning: and where such an Indication is wanting, we have the Apostles to direct us, who have given abundant Evidence of their Divine Credentials, that they were appointed by God to be the Interpreters of his Oracles, and Publishers of his Will.

C H A P. IV.

Wherein some Difficulties are Resolved relating to the PROPHETS themselves, or their manner of Writing.

III. **I** Proceed to discourse concerning the Third General Head, I propos'd at the Beginning of the last Chapter to be consider'd, in relation to the Prophets: which is to *Resolve some Difficulties concerning the Prophets themselves or their Prophecies*. And here 'tis not my Design to give a particular Answer, to all the Objections that have been rais'd against the Prophe-tical Writings: most of which have been fully answer'd by several Excellent *Writers* of late^a, not to mention the Ancients: I intend only in this Chapter to consider Two Difficulties, one relating to the Prophets themselves, and the other to their manner of Writing, which have not yet, that I know

a Bp Stillingfleet,
Orig. Sac.
Letter to
a Deist.
Huetii
demonst.
Evangel.
M. Smith
of Pro-
phesy.
Dr. Spence's
Vanity of
Vulgar
Prophe-
cies.

of, been throughly Explain'd by any Writer: the First is, *The Obscurity of the Prophetical Writings*, the other, *Concerning the Marks and Signs whereby True Prophets were distinguish'd from False*. The latter of these Inquiries is Embarrass'd with Great Difficulties, for the Scripture gives us very little Light in this matter, insomuch that one would wonder, since there are so many Contests between the True and False Prophets related in Scripture, and so many Cautions given against hearkening to False Prophets and Seducers, that there should be so little said concerning the Marks whereby they might be distinguish'd from the True ones.

I. I begin with the former Difficulty, viz. *The Obscurity of the Prophecies*. But here I shall first Premise that Obscurity is not Inseparable from Prophecy, for there are some very plain Prophecies in Scripture: as the Foretelling the 70. years Captivity of the Jews, and that Cyrus, after that time was expired

pired, should *Restore them to their Land and Rebuild Jerusalem^b*, the *Succession of the Monarchies in Daniel^c*, and those Prophecies concerning the Messias, which foretell his Coming, while the *Second Temple was standing, and before the Destruction of the Jewish Commonwealth^d*. But notwithstanding some few Exceptions, generally speaking, there is something of Obscurity in the Delivery of Prophecies. Now beside the Causes of this which arise from the Prophetical Style, which is full of Metaphors, and of lofty Expressions, such as naturally flow from a Heat of Fancy, where Great and Surprizing Ideas have made a deep Impression, besides this there are other Reasons to be assign'd for this Obscurity, which are taken from the very Nature and Design of Prophecies, and the manner how they are Fulfilled.

1. With Respect to the first of these, viz. the Design of Prophecies, I lay down this Rule,

That

^b Jer. 25.

11, 12.

-29. 10.

Is. 44. 28.

^c Dan. 2.

c. 7. c. 8.

^d Dan. 9.

25. &c.

Hagg. 2.

6. -9.

Malac. 3.

1. -4. 1.

That Prophecies are not so much design'd by God to give men the Knowledge of things before-hand, as to confirm mens Faith after they are come to pass, and convince them that this was God's Work.

e Gen. 13.
17.

f P. 139.
&c.

I willingly grant, that God did Reveal things to come to his Prophets, both to do them a particular Honour^e, by making them Privy to his secret Counsels and Designs, and likewise to prepare and fit men for the Blessings foretold, of which I have discours'd in the last Chapter^f: but yet I think the Use of Prophecies chiefly consists in the Comparing the Event with the Prophecy, which when they are found perfectly to agree, 'tis a great Evidence of God's Providence in General, and that this particular Event which the Prophecy relates to, was an Effect of his Overruling Power. There are several passages in the Prophets that plainly shew, this was the Intent of many of their Prophecies. God himself gives this Reason why he foretold the Re-
stau-

stauration of the Jewish Captivityⁱ, I have even from the beginning *fil.* 48. 5.
 declar'd it to thee, before it came
 to pass I shew'd it thee, lest thou
 shouldest say, My Idol hath done them,
 and my Graven Image, and my Mol-
 ten Image hath commanded them. And
 such Events as the Jews were rea-
 dy to ascribe to their Idols, if
 God had not prevented it, many
 others would willingly ascribe to
 Fate or Chance, and not acknow-
 ledge the hand of God in them.
 And therefore God to vindicate
 his Providence, and shew that he
 Interests himself in the Govern-
 ment of the world, and more e-
 specially in such Cases where his
 Church is concern'd, has been
 pleas'd to Foretell several Future
 Events, that when they came to
 pass, men might be convinc'd that
 they were the *Lord's doing*. The
 same thing is intimated in those
 Remarkable Passages of *Daniel*.

Thou O Daniel, shut up the words ^{g Dan.}
and seal the Book even to the time of ^{12. 4.}
the End: Many shall run to and fro, ^{See ver.}
and knowledge shall be increased. ^{9, 10.}

to

to the same purpose, c. 8. 26. *Shut thou up the Vision, for yet it shall be for many days.* The meaning of which places is, "Lay this Prophecy up safe till after times, for it can't

See If. "be understood ^h as yet; but when
29. 11. "the things themselves are near,
Rev. 5 2. "and ready to be brought to pass,
"then men shall begin to under-
"stand it: the Gradual Comple-
"tion of the Prophecies shall
"open their Understandings, and
"the comparing those parts of
"the Prophecy which are al-
"ready fulfilled with the event,
"shall give light into, and direct
"Men to Judge of those parti-
"culars which are yet to be ful-

filled. We find St. *John* ⁱ receives
i Rev. 22. a Command quite contrary to this
10. which was given to *Daniel*, ground-
ed upon the contrary Reason,
Seal not the sayings of the Prophecy of this Book, for the time is at hand.
'Tis indeed very probable that a great part of the *Revelations* is not yet fulfill'd, and therefore one would think that this Prophecy might have been Order'd to be Seal'd

Seal'd up at the first Delivery of it as well as *Daniel's*. But the difference between these two Prophecies seems to lie here, that tho some parts of the *Revelations* belong to the Latter times of the Church, yet others relate to the First Ages of it, and upon that account 'twas fit that it should not be Sealed up, but laid open to be Read^k and Consider'd, from the ^{Rev. 1.} very time when it was deliver'd,^{3.} because the Accomplishment of some parts of it Commenc'd very early: and therefore the things contain'd in it, are said to be such as *must shortly come to pass*^{1.} Where-^{Rev. 1.} as that Prophecy of *Daniel's* which^{1.} relates to *Antichrist*, (and I suppose the Command of Sealing up the Book belongs only to that particular Prophecy, as will appear by comparing the Context of the two foremention'd passages^m together) I say, the coming of *Antichrist* foretold by *Daniel*, was a great way off of *Daniel's* own time, and no part of the Prophecy relating to it, shortly to be accomplish'd.

^m Dan. II.
36, &c.
to c. 12. f.
-8 13, to
26.

I think from these places 'tis evident, that the Use of several Prophecies according to God's own Intention, did chiefly consist in Comparing them with the Event, after they were fulfill'd: and that they were in a manner uselefs, as a *Book* that is *Sealed up*, till the things themselves appear'd. Now if Prophecies were design'd to be Explained by the Event, this supposes that the words in which they are deliver'd, are not to be plain of themselves. But there is another Reason why God should not give Men a Clear and Distinct Knowledge of what is to come, and that is, because

2. *The fulfilling of Prophecies, if the things are distinctly Revealed, is Inconsistent with the Freedom of Humane Actions, and the Manner how Providence brings the things Foretold to pass: which is a Second Reason why Prophecies should be Obscure.*

God always makes use of Men to be the Instruments of his Providence, but if they certainly knew what was to come to pass, and how it was to be brought to pass, they could
could

could not be Instrumental in bringing it to pass in a Rational and Free way of Acting; because it would not leave them wholly to themselves, to have a full Power over, and a free Determination of their own Actions. And that whether the thing foreknown be Good or Bad: if it be Good, it tempts Men to Carelesness, and to presume too much upon God's promise, for then Men are apt to argue thus, "What need we trouble our selves with helping to fulfil God's promises, as if he were not able to bring about his Designs without our Assistance?" "God is obliged in Honour to see his Words made good, and we need not fear but he will take care that they be perform'd. On the other side, if the Prophecy foretell some Sinful Action to be committed, such a Prophecy would Humanely speaking, very often destroy it self, and the very foretelling it plainly, would hinder the thing foretold from coming to pass. For if such Prophecies were so plain

plain that every body at first sight could see the whole Contrivance, and look thro all the Scenes of the Action, they could not be brought to pass without offering violence to Men's Voluntary Determinations, and making them purely Passive in producing the foretold Events, and meer Tools in the Hand of God Almighty. For Instance, if our Saviours Crucifixion had been foretold with all the particular Circumstances, the Manner how, and the precise Time when it was to be brought to pass, and the Persons that were to be concern'd in it, we can't imagine so many of the Chief and Principal Men among the Jews would have had a Hand in it, without being perfectly carried on to it by an Overruling Power against their own Inclinations: which besides its thwarting the Principles of Humane Nature, must make God the Author of Sin. But since the Prophecies concerning the *Messias* and his Sufferings, were deliver'd with such a mixture of Obscurity, as
 never

never to be fully understood till after the Event, this gave Room for the Jews Malice to concur with God's Providence in bringing this to pass, and so as St. Paul tells them, *" Because they knew him a Acts not, nor yet the voices of the Prophets, 13. 27. they fulfilled them in condemning him.*

Again, as plainly foretelling who are to be Actors in Wickedness, would, without supposing manifest Violence offer'd to Men's Inclinations, in many Cases hinder some of them from being Instrumental in bringing about God's Designs, so perhaps it would be a new Temptation to others, and make them more furiously bent upon Evil: just as the mentioning wickedness stirs up some Men's Ill Inclinations, and makes them eager to commit it. Especially since the foretelling it as certainly to come to pass, affords a Plea for Men's Wickedness: for Men that are bent upon Evil, and are glad of any Colour to justify their Sin, will conclude from thence, that it can be no Sin to be subservient to

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God's

God's Providence, and Assisting in the Accomplishment of his Will and Purpose; or if it be a Sin, it must lie at his door. So that if Prophecies were too plainly deliver'd, this would often be the consequence, that the bringing the Event to pass would be wholly imputed to the Clearness of the Prediction: just as Publick Commotions do often take their Rise from the spreading about of Prophecies concerning the Death of the Prince or the Change of the Government. Now this is contrary to God's method of dealing with Men: for tho we cannot comprehend after what manner he foresees how Free Agents will Determine themselves, yet we have all the Reason in the World to believe, that Gods Prescience does not Interfere with mens Free-will. And therefore as we believe that things do not come to pass meerly because God Foresees them, but rather that he Foresees them because their own proper Causes will bring them to pass: so 'tis agreeable to the methods of
Provi-

Providence, that Prophecies should be so worded, as not to have any Influence upon the parties concern'd in bringing them about; that it might not be said, The thing came to pass because it was Foretold, but it was foretold because it would come to pass, as an Ordinary effect of a Natural Cause.

'Tis true indeed, we may observe that some Scripture Prophecies by being too plainly deliver'd, have made the *Hearts of Wicked Men wholly set in them*, to bring to pass the Evil foretold ^b. But perhaps

God might do this on purpose to take off the minds of the Jews from that greedy desire they had to search into Futurity, when they saw what Ill Consequences did sometimes attend that Knowledge. The Sum of the Argument is this: that the Evil which if Foretold Darkly and Obscurely, needed nothing to bring it to pass, but only God's suffering Men's Wickedness to break out, and permitting them to act according as their Ill Inclinations prompt them: if it were

^b See 1
King. 11.
31, 32.
2 King. 8.
12, 13, 15.
-- 10. 10.

foretold Plainly and Clearly, could not be effected without supposing him to offer Violence to Humane Nature, and making him a Party concern'd, and a Tempter of men to Wickedness.

From all that has been said upon this head it appears, that whether the thing foretold be Good or Evil, the foretelling it too Punctually and Distinctly, would make Prophecy a *Felo de se*, and be an effectual way to defeat its Accomplishment, for then it could not be brought to pass in a way that is suitable to the Divine Purity and Wisdom. For this is one of the Master-pieces of the Divine Wisdom, to bring about its Designs in such a manner, as never to put any Force upon the Freedom of man's Will, so that the Events may rather seem the Natural Effects of Free Agents, than the Works of an Overruling Providence. To this purpose speaks the Author of the Book of Wisdom^c, *Thy Wisdom, O Lord, reacheth from one end to another Mightily,*
and

^c Wisd.
8. 1.

and Sweetly doth she order all things.
 God sees every Link of that Vast Chain of Causes, and knows how they depend upon each other: what Force each Circumstance has in determining mens Resolutions, and what it is that turns the Balance of the Mind one way or t'other: and therefore tho he brings to pass all his Purposes in an Irresistable manner, yet he does it withall in so Easie and Gentle a one, that the Events look like the Result of mens own Free Determinations, and one would think that the Natural Agents, let alone to themselves would have produc'd the same Effect.

These two Reasons fully justify the Obscurity of Prophecies, and shew us the Use of them, that we are not to look upon them as deliver'd meerly to gratifie the Curiosity men have to pry into what is Future, but to be an Argument to us of Gods Overruling Providence, which extends it self to the most Minute Actions, and very often makes such Accidents,

as seem to us to be Trivial and Insignificant, Instrumental in bringing to pass the Greatest and most Surprizing Events : and especially to shew us, That nothing befalls his Church but by his determinate Counsel and Foreknowledge.

I will conclude this Head with a Brief Caution to those, who do not think the Prophecies concerning Christ and the Gospel Clear enough to be an Argument for our Belief : and that is this, That they ought not to expect that the Prophecies should give as distinct an Account of Christ as the Gospels do, nor because they do not, should they slight them as Insignificant : but they should first of all consider the Evidence of Truth, which the Gospel brings along with it, and then Compare it with the Prophecies. And thus, tho the Prophecies be Obscure in themselves, yet when they are compar'd with the Event, as they will receive Light from it, so they will add Light to it. Just as that Obscure Saying of our Saviour's, ^d Destroy

stroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up, was not understood by his Disciples when he spoke it, but afterward when they Compar'd it with the Event which it foretold, it was a new Argument to them that he came forth from God^e. e Ver. 22.

II. Another Difficulty concerning Prophecy, the Resolving of which will tend to Establish the Authority of the Prophets, is, *Concerning the Signs whereby True Prophets were distinguish'd from False ones.* 'Tis plain by the Prophetick Writings, that there were False Prophets that oppos'd themselves to the True ones, and utter'd quite contrary Prophecies to theirs. But tho the True Prophets warn the People often not to be seduc'd by these False pretenders, yet we can discover but little out of their Writings, concerning the Marks whereby the True Prophets were to be distinguish'd from the False ones. Those which I can gather from the Holy Writings are these following.

1. *If a Prophet endeavour'd to persuade the people to Idolatry, this was*

a certain Mark that he was a False Prophet, tho he should confirm what he said by a Sign. This Rule is laid down by Moses^e, and is groundd upon very good reason: For since God had manifested his Power to the *Israelites* by so many Undeniable Miracles and Proofs, 'twas not reasonable that working a single Wonder, or foretelling one Event which might come to pass by meer Chance, should overthrow the Authority of so many more and greater Works. For tho God doth suffer Impostors to work Strange Feats sometimes for the Trial of his people^f, yet I doubt not but he always takes care that his own Works shall visibly exceed theirs, both in *Power*, in *Gravity*, and in *Usefulness*: so that their *Tricks* shall appear as just nothing when compar'd with his Miracles, as *Aaron's Rod swallowed up those of the Magicians*^g. Or else God would allow too great an Authority to Impostors, and make Miracles by themselves no Evidence of a Divine Mission, since 'twould be in some Cases impossible

^e Deut.
13. 1.

^f Deut.
13. 3.
Matth,
24. 24.

^g Exod.
8. 12.

possible to distinguish True ones from Counterfeit. And this I take to be a satisfactory Answer to that Question, *Whether God's permitting Evil Spirits and Seducers to shew Signs and Wonders, does not evacuate the Authority of Miracles in general*: tho I grant there are other Marks ^h whereby to distinguish True Miracles from False, which 'tis not my Business at present to discourse of.

2. 'Tis reasonable to think that the Prophets, when they first entred upon their Prophetick Office, gave some Sign of their Mission, either by working a Miracle, or by revealing some Secret, Remote or Future thing, which was not within the Compass of Humane Knowledge, and the Nature of which was such, that a little time would quickly discover, whether the Prophet spake True or not. We may find footsteps in Scripture of these several ways being accounted the Marks of a Prophet. We find the Pharisees demand a sign from Heaven ⁱ of our Saviour, such as Joshua ^k, Samuel ^l, Isaiah ^m, and Elias ⁿ had

hV. Orig.
c. Cels. l.
1 p. 53.
l. 2. p. 90,
91. Ed.
Cant.
Bp. Stil-
lingfl.
Orig. fact.
l. 2. c. 10.

i Matth.
16. 1.
Joh. 6.
30.
Matth.
12. 38.
k Jos. 10.
12.
l 1 Sam.
12. 18.
m If. 38.
8.
n 2 King.
1. 10.

had wrought. And the Samaritan Woman judg'd our Saviour to be the Christ, because *he told her all things that ever she did*^o. This shews that in the common Opinion, the Discovering of some Hidden thing, and out of the ordinary reach of Humane Knowledge, was esteem'd the Mark of a Prophet: and the *Messias* being the Prophet the Jews at that time Expected, the Woman concludes from thence that he who knew such Secrets must be the *Messias*. And perhaps for this Reason the Jews who lookt upon our Saviour as a Pretender only to Prophecy, demand of him the Discovery of a Mock-secret^p, viz. *Who it was that smote him when he was Blindfolded*.

^p Matth.
26. 68.

It appears from other places, that the Prophets did commonly foretell something which should Shortly come to pass, and the Accomplishment of this their Prediction did establish their Authority for the Future, and gave Credibility to those Prophecies of theirs, whose Accomplishment was

was at a greater distance. So the Man of God that *Prophefied against the altar of Bethel*⁹, beside his foretelling above 300. years before the Birth of that Prince, that one of *David's* Family *Josiah* by name, should Defile that Altar; at the same time gave another Sign of his Mission that was presently to come to pass, viz. *that the Altar should be rent, and the Ashes of it pour'd out*^r. The fulfilling of which was an Argument of his Veracity as to the other part of his Prophecy; where the Event was at such a Distance, that tho it should not Correspond with the Prophecy, it could not at present be Disproved, and therefore the bare Foretelling it did not bring along with it sufficient Evidence that the Prophet who spoke it, was really sent from God. In like manner 'tis said of *Samuel*^r, that *all Israel*^r *knew him to be an Establish'd Prophet of the Lord's*, when they saw that *none of his Prophetick words fell to the ground*. So *Ezekiel* having deliver'd a Prediction, adds, *When this*

91 Kings
13. 1, 2.

r lb. v. 3.

r 1 Sam.
3. 19, 20.
-c. 96.

r Ezek.
33. 33.

*this shall come to pass, then they shall know that a Prophet has been among them: as if he had said, "However
 "Men may slight my Words now,
 "and value them no more than a
 u ver. 32. "Song" which Men hearken to
 "only to pass away the time, yet
 "the fulfilling of what I say will
 "establish my Authority beyond
 "Contradiction. Which is an Argument that Men commonly suspended their Judgement concerning the Authority of a Prophet, till they had Tried his Veracity, by seeing whether some one Prophecy of his, which he delivered as a Test of his Mission, came to pass or no.*

3. Tho Prophets usually gave a Sign in Testimony of their Mission, yet Some Prophets did not, who were therefore to be Tried by other Rules.

'Tis Recorded particularly of John Baptist, that he did no Miracle^x, and yet the people counted him a Prophet^y, which they would not have done, if a Prophet had always given a Sign, before he was accounted so: and we see that even the

^x John

10. 41.

^y Matth.

21. 26.

the Priests and Elders could not find any thing to Object against his Authority ². Now in such a Case, I suppose they judged of a Prophet's Pretences by some of these following Tokens, by the *Holiness of his Life and Doctrine*, by the *Agreement of what he said with the Predictions or discourses of other Prophets*, and especially if another Prophet of undoubted Authority bare witness to him: according to that Maxime of the Jewish Masters ², *The Prophet, of whom some other Undoubted Prophet witnesseth that he is a Prophet, is assuredly such.* All these Marks concurr'd in John Baptist; his Office was plainly describ'd by *Isaiah* ^b, and both that and his Person by *Malachi* ^c: his Doctrine was Holy, and his Life an exact Copy of what he taught; so here was no room to suspect him a Counterfeit, tho he gave no Sign to attest his Mission.

We may farther observe, that the Prophets of the Old Testament insist upon these three things, *viz. Purity of Doctrine, Holiness of Life,* and

² Ibid
ver. 25.

^a Maimonid. Fundam. Legis. c. 10. Sect. 9.

^b Is. 40. 3.
^c Mal. 3. 1.
--4. 5.

and *Agreement with other Prophets*, as the Tokens whereby they distinguished themselves from the False Prophets. They tell us, there is as plain a difference between the Visions of True Prophets and the Dreams of False Ones, as *betwixt Chaff and Wheat*^d: which must be upon this account, that the one sort tends to discourage Sin, and set forth the terrible Consequences of it^e, whereas the other designs to sooth Men up in their Vices, by *Healing the Wounds* of the Conscience *Slightly*, saying, *Peace, Peace*^f, and promising Men Prosperity without their Repentance and Amendment of Life. To the same purpose *Ezekiel* says of the False Prophets, that they *Sow pillows to men's elbows*^g, that they may sleep on securely in their Sins. The True Prophets accuse the False Ones of several Vices in their Conversation and Manner of Living: of making^h a gain of their Profession, and speaking *smooth things*

d Jer. 23.
23.
e Ibid.
ver. 29.
f Jer. 6.
14.
g Ezek.
13. 18.
h Jer. 6. 13.
Ezek. 13.
19.
Mich.
3. 5, 11.
This was
one of the
Argu-
ments
made use
of to
prove
Monta-
nus his
followers
False
Prophets,
because
they took

Money for Propheying: beside that they were guilty of Theft and other Crimes. v. Euseb. H. E. l. 5. c. 18.

for

for advantage ⁱ: of Adultery ^k and ⁱ If. 30. 10.
 Riot ^l, of being Fearless and Un- ^k Jer. 23.
 concern'd at God's Judgements, ^{14-29. 23.}
 and not endeavouring by Prayers ¹ If. 28. 7.
 or other eminent Acts of Piety to ^{Mic. 2. 11.}
 avert them ^m. And as to the o- ^m Ezek.
 ther Mark of True Prophets, viz. ^{13. 5.}
their Agreement with other Prophets, ^{Jer. 27. 18.}
 we find *Jeremy* Appealing to it, in
 the Contest between him and *Han-*
aniah, who Prophesied ⁿ of the re- ⁿ Jer. 28.
 turn of *Jechoniah's* Captivity, con- ^{3, 4.}
 trary to what *Jeremy* had foretold.
 Upon which *Jeremy* tells him ^o, *The* ^o 1b. ver.
Prophets that were before me and be- ^{8, 9.}
fore thee of old, prophesied of War
and Evil and Pestilence, the Prophet
that prophesieth of Peace, when the
word of the Prophet shall come to
pass, then shall the Prophet be known
that the Lord hath sent him. Where
Jeremy argues against the Truth
 of *Hananiah's* Prophecy, and proves
 that what himself had prophesied
 was much more Credible of the
 two, because many other Pro-
 phets agreed with him in prophe-
 sying evil against the Jews, and
 several other Countries, whereas
 he

he being single in his Prophecy concerning Peace, nothing but the Punctual Answering of the Event, could give him the Authority of a Prophet : and people must Suspend their judgments till Time should discover whether he were in the Right or no. Which place seems likewise to imply, that *Hananiah* had never before given a Sign to attest his Mission, and therefore his Credit would justly be questionable, till men could see whether his Sign came to pass or not.

From what has been said, we may conclude it probable, that where a Prophet gave no Sign whereby men might make Tryal of the Reality of his Pretensions, they made a judgment of it by considering his Education, whether he had been brought up in the *Schools of the Prophets*, which were the Seminaries of Inspir'd persons ; by examining his Manner of Life, his Doctrine, and his Agreement with other Prophets : and the more any of these was liable to Exceptions, the more
need

need was there that he should give a Sign to attest his Mission. So for Example, 'twas more requisite that *Amos* should give a Sign who was no *Prophet* by Education or *Prophets Son*, but a *Herdman* ^P by Profession, than any of ^{p Amos} those *Prophets* who were of the ^{8. 14.} Priestly Order, or brought up among the *Sons of the Prophets*.

C H A P. V.

Concerning the Inspiration of the Canonical Books of the Old Testament in General, and of the Historical and Poetical Books in Particular.

THe Two Preceding Chapters concerning Prophecy being a Digression with respect to the Book which I undertook to Answer, tho not with Respect to the General Design of this Treatise, which is to *Vindicate the*

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Authority of the Scriptures: I return to Mr. N's Memorial, as 'tis Communicated by the Author of the *Letters*, and shall Examine in this Chapter the Exceptions which he makes against the Authority of the Old Testament Writings. Which are of two sorts, General and Particular: The General Exceptions are levell'd against the Authority of the *Old Testament Canon*, which this Author supposes^a to consist of all the *Ancient Writings*, whether Perfect or Imperfect, whether Inspir'd or not, which were remaining among the Jews at the time when this Collection was made. The Particular Exceptions relate to Particular Books, which he supposes not to be Inspir'd, either because the matter of them is such as Men may know and faithfully relate without Inspiration, such as are the *Historical Books*^b: or else because they contain something in them which is Unworthy of God being its Author, which Exception he advances against several Passages in the *Psalms* and the *Proverbs*, and against

^a Fr. p.
279.
En. p. 106.

^b Fr. p.
233.
En. p. 31.

against the Intire Books of *Job*,
Ecclesiastes, and the *Song of Salomon*^c.

In Answer to these Twofold Ex-
ceptions, I shall

c Fr. p.
271, &c.
Eng. p.
93, &c.

- I. *Say something concerning the Authority and Inspiration of the Old-Testament Canon in General.*
- II. *I shall make a Reply to his Objections against the Particular Books which are part of this Canon.*

1. As to the First, it must be confess'd that we cannot give an Exact Account, by whose Authority the Canon of the Old Testament was settled, for we have no Writings extant that give us a History of that Affair. But 'tis very probable the Collection of the Canonical Books, was made in *Ezra's* time, or not long after:

1. Because the Scripture-History ends about that time. I know nothing of later date in it, than the mention of *Jaddus* by *Nehemiah*^d who was Contemporary with *Ezra*, which *Jaddus* was High

^dNeh.
12. 10, 21.

Priest at the Beginning of *Alexander* the Great's Reign. And whatever others may have objected to the contrary, the mentioning of this *Jaddus*, is very reconcileable with the time when *Nehemiah* writ, as a *Great Prelate* has lately made out with Incomparable Learning and Clearness^e. 2. Because *Malachi* the Prophet, that lived much about the same time, seems to *Seal up the Vision and Prophecy* among the Jews, by referring them to the *Law of Moses* as their standing Instructor, till the Gospel should be revealed: and pointing out to *Elias* the Forerunner of the *Messiah*, as the next great Prophet that was to be reveal'd. And indeed his Prophecy looks as if it were design'd to Connect the Old and New Testament together, by putting a period to the Old Testament Revelation, and directing men to the New for further Instruction. This Argument will appear more probable, if we consider 3^{ly}, That under the *Maccabees*, the Jews look'd

e Letter
to Dr.
Sherlock
about a
passage in
Josephus,
&c.

f Mal. 4.
4. 5.

look'd upon the Gift of Prophecy as wholly ceased, and were of Opinion it had been so for a considerable time^g. The same Opinion is confirm'd not long after by the Author of *Ecclesiasticus*^h. 4. If we suppose the *LXX. Interpreters* Translated all the Old Testament, which is an Opinion that Learned menⁱ have brought good Reasons for, then 'tis plain the Canon must have been settled before the time when that Version was made, which was done under *Ptolomee Philadelphus*, and as 'tis very probable, at the Beginning of his Reign^k. 5. However that be, yet 'tis certain that when the Book of *Ecclesiasticus* was writ, the Canon of the Old Testament was settled: for he makes mention of the *Twelve Prophets* altogether^l, which is an Argument that the Smaller Prophets were then Collected, and Compil'd into one Book, which Book was afterward call'd the *Book of the Prophets*^m. Nay further, the Author of the *Prologue* to that Book, speaks of the *Law, Prophets and*

g See
1 Macc.
4. 46.
-9. 27.
-14. 41.
h Ecclus.
36. r4, 15,
16.
i Wal-
ton. Pro-
legom. 9.
in Bibl.
Polygl. n.
11.
Vales. in
Eus. H. E.
l. 5. c. 8.
k *Vales.*
ibid.
l Ecclus.
49. 10.
m See
Act. 7.
42.
Justin M.
c. Tryph.
p. 45. 50.
57. (Ed.
Steph.)
Cyprian.
Epist. 59.
Ed. Oxon.
other

other Books of Scripture, as then Translated into Greek, which is an Undeniable Argument that the Canon was then Completed. And tho we suppose that *Prologue* to be made by the Grandchild of the principal Author *Jesus* the son of *Syrath*, which Younger *Syracides* lived in the time of *Euergetes* II. commonly called *Ptolomee Physcon*: yet it appears by the Beginning of that *Prologue*, that his Grandfather studied the same Holy Books, which he afterwards says were turn'd into Greek. And this Elder *Syracides* speaks of *Simon* the son of *Onias* the High Priest, as one whom he very well remembered *: now that *Simon* was High Priest in the Beginning of *Philopator's* Reign *, who was next in Succession but one to *Philadelphus*. So that the Canon of Scripture will appear to be as old as *Philadelphus's* time, because 'tis evident from hence that 'twas Translated all into Greek in a little time after, tho we should not suppose the whole work performed by the

* c. 50.

1, &c.

* See

3 Macc.

2. 1. com.

with c. 1.

1.

LXX. Lastly, to these Considerations we may add the Concurring Testimony of all the *Ancient Writers*, both Jewish and Christian, who agree in supposing the Canon of the Old Testament, to have been Compil'd in or about *Ezra's* time, and who probably had the Authority of some Ancient Writers for what they say, which now are lost. And if these Considerations taken all together, have any Force in them to prove the Canon of the Old Testament, to have been settled in *Ezra's* time, or in the next Age; I say if it were settled so early, this very thing will add great Weight to its Authority.

For 1. 'tis agreed on all hands that *Ezra*, who calls himself a *Ready Scribe in the Law of Moses*^p, Revis'd the Holy Writings, ^{p Ezr 7.} Retrievd them from the Corruptions, which the Scarcity of Copies, and the Disuse of the *Hebrew* Language during the Captivity, had brought into them: supplied and completed many of them,

and put them into Order and Method: And when a man of so great Authority as *Ezra* was, had done all this so lately, it cannot be imagin'd but that the Compilers of the Canon, must have had a particular Regard to his Judgment, and admitted no Books into their Collection, but what were allow'd of by *Ezra*: or if they were of Later date than his time, the Writing of them must have been within the Memory of these Compilers, so that they were proper Judges, whether a Book deserv'd to be esteem'd Sacred or not. So that from hence twill follow, that the Authority of the main Body of the Canon, bottoms upon the Judgment and Authority of *Ezra*: whom if we should grant to have been no Prophet, yet we cannot think, but in a matter of such Moment, as the Revising and putting in order the Holy Writings, he would not only use the best Skill he had himself, but likewise consult with *Haggai*, *Zechary* or *Malachi*; (the last of which

which must needs have been alive in his time, and possibly the other Two also) and do nothing without their Advice. For we find that at the first Return from the Captivity, in a matter of much less moment, *viz.* where some that pretended to the Priesthood could not prove their Pedigree, the Governour would determine nothing, but left the matter undecided, till a Priest should arise who had *Urim* and *Thummim*⁹. And if any such Priest ^{9 Ezr. 2. 62, 63.} did arise afterward, as, if we believe *Josephus*, there did; for he tell us that that Oracle ceas'd but 200. years before his time^r, 'tis very probable that the Judgment of the Canonical Books was left to him, to determine which were such, as the Learned Mr. *Dodwell* has made appear in the *Appendix*^r *f* Sect 9. to his *Lectures*, now in the Press.

2. This Early date of the Canon of the Old Testament, quite destroys that Fancy of our Authors^x, that the *Jews put together* ^{272 Eng. p. 106.} *all the Fragments that remain'd of* *their*

their Ancient Books, so that the Canon of Scripture was their whole Library. For in the First place 'tis plain, that the Chronicles are Extracts out of larger Records, which they often Refer to, and yet these Books were Compil'd after the Captivity, as appears by several passages ¹ *in them: and 'tis not likely that the Originals which escaped the Destruction of Records, occasion'd by the Ruine of the Commonwealth and the Captivity which ensu'd, should be lost in so little a time as was between the Compiling the Chronicles, and making the Canon. Especially since Josephus* ² *tells us, that the Genealogies of the High-Priests and their Succession, for above Two Thousand years past, were preserved in the Publick Records, and remain'd to his own time.*

1 1 Chr.
3.17.
2 1 Chr. 56.
2 1, &c.

2 L. 1. c.
App. p.
136. D.

Again, several Books which never were in the Canon, were Extant when the New Testament was writ, and are Cited there as Writings of Credit and Antiquity; such as are the *Prophecy of Enoch*,
and

and the *Assumption of Moses*, both
 referr'd to by St. Jude ^a: as also ^a Jude 9
 several other Ancient Books, from and 14.
 whence both Christ and his Apo-
 stles take many Passages concern-
 ing Historical Matters, which are
 not Extant in the Canonical Wri-
 ters ^b. And 'twas from such An- ^b cc
 cient Writings probably, that Jo- Matth.
 sephus took some Stories which he 23. 37.
 relates of *Moses* ^c, and of other Luk. 4.
 Persons. Besides we find *Apocry-* 25.
phals quoted by *Barnabas* in every Jam. 5.
 Page of his *Epistle* almost; by *Cle-* 17.
mens Alexandrinus and other An- Act. 7.
 cient Writers in several places, 22, 52.
 many of which 'tis likely, were Heb. 11.
 Written Originally in *Hebrew*, since 37. - 12.
 by the Matters they Treat of, we 21.
 may reasonably judge them to be 2 Tim.
 as old as the Collection of the 3. 8.
 Canon: and were certainly lookt V. Orig.
 upon as Books of great Antiquity, Epist ad
 or else they would not have been *African.*
 Cited by these Authors under the *c* Antiq.
 Venerable name of Scripture. From l. 2. c. 5.
 all which it appears, that the Com-
 pilers of the Canon did not take
 in Promiscuously whatever *Hebrew*
 Writ-

Writings they could find; but used all possible diligence to distinguish Sacred Writings, and such as were design'd by God for the Use of the Church, from those which were not so. The Reasons which Confute this Opinion of our Author, concerning the Collection of the Canon of the Old Testament, I thought fit to represent all together, when I was upon this Subject, tho I am sensible that 'tis only the first of these Considerations, which can be inferr'd as a Corollary from what has been said concerning the Early Date of the Old Testament Canon.

What I have hitherto said concerning the Authority and Antiquity of the Old Testament Canon, I cannot call Absolutely Certain or Demonstrative; but I may safely say thus much, that it carries in it a greater Degree of Probability, than any thing the Adversaries of the Canon have advanced to the Contrary. So that tho we should grant what our Author says^d, *That there is no proof at all*

d Fr. p.
276.
Eng. p.
102.

all that Esdras and the Great Sanhedrim of that time, among whom were Haggai, Zachary and Malachi, Compil'd the Canon; yet still 'tis probable 'twas made by those that were so near their time, that they knew what their Sentiments were in this Matter, and made this Collection accordingly.

But if this Proof be not thought Satisfactory, I should think any Christian ought to acquiesce in the Judgement of our Saviour: and 'tis plain he lookt upon the Jewish Canon, which was Undoubtedly the same in his time, which is now received in the *Protestant Churches*: I say, he lookt upon it as a Collection of Holy Writings design'd by God for the Instruction of his Church, and the Rule the Jews were to have recourse to, when they would inform themselves what was the Will of God.

He bids them *Search the Scriptures*, without distinguishing as our Author does ^e, the Truly Inspir'd Books, from those which are not so: *for in them, saith he, ye think,*
and

^e J. h. 5.

3.

f Fr. p.

277,

279, 285.

Eng p.

101, 106,

116.

and so far ye are in the right, *that ye have Eternal Life*. 'Tis strange our Saviour should not correct this Mistake of theirs, if some of the Books they had such a great Veneration for, favour'd such Dangerous Doctrines as our Author thinks the Book of *Ecclesiastes* does ^g, and contain'd *Expressions very like Blasphemies*, as he is pleas'd to speak concerning the Book of *Job* ^h. For if this were true, 'twas certainly very dangerous for Men to Search, or be too much Conversant in these Books, especially since they came Recommended under the Character of a Divine Inspiration. 'Tis strange our Saviour ⁱ should prove the Passion and Resurrection of the Messiah, not only out of *Moses* and the *Prophets*, but also out of the *Psalms*; by which our Author ^k understands those Writings which the Jews call *Chetubim*, if these Books be of so little Authority, as he would persuade us they are, Mr. N. would fain Evade the Force of this Argument taken from
our

^g Fr. p.
272.
Eng. p.
96.
^h Fr. p.
275.
Eng. p.
101.

ⁱ Luk.
24. 44.

^k Fr. p.
277.
Eng. p.
103.

our Saviours Authority, by telling us¹, that Christ never design'd *to Criticize upon the Sacred Books, or to Correct those Errors of the Jews, which were of small Importance.* But since our Saviour Criticiz'd so far upon the Sacred Books, as to Confute the false Glosses^m which the Scribes and Pharisees had made upon them, and to Reject the Traditionsⁿ which they had Equall'd to the Word of God, and in some Cases Prefer'd before it: it seems as necessary for him to have distinguish'd between the True Scriptures, and those Books which were Undeservedly esteem'd such. Especially if these Latter advance Doctrines, that do not well agree with the Former, as our Author^o indeavours to prove, concerning several places of the *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes* and *Job*: for then the Admitting the Authority of such Writings, is of as Ill Consequence as the Receiving the Traditions of the Pharisees could be. Nay with his leave, I think it an Error of more dangerous Consequence, to
Equal

1 Fr. p.

278.

Eng. p.

104, 105.

^m Matt.

5. - c. 23.

ⁿ c. 15. 1.^o Fr. p.

272, &c.

Eng. p.

95, &c.

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Eng. p.

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m Matt.

5. c. 23.

nc 15. 1.

o Fr. p.

272, &c.

Eng. p.

95, &c.

Equal a Book that is not Inspir'd when it contains False Doctrine, with one that is truly Divine, than to Equal such Traditions as the Pharisees held, with an Inspir'd Writing. Because a Tradition will probably in time be forgotten, and so lose all its Authority, which we see has been the Fate of most of the *Pharisaical* Traditions ; whereas a Book that has once been generally Reputed of Divine Authority, 'tis likely will maintain that Character for ever. For its very Character will make Men careful to preserve it, and the Older it grows, the Stronger will the Plea of Prescription be for its Divine Original : and Consequently the More will be Impos'd upon by it, as we see hath Actually happen'd in the Case we are now speaking of, if our Author's Opinion be true. For the whole Christian and Jewish Church hath time out of mind, lookt upon the Books contain'd in the Jewish Canon to be Inspir'd, and have upon all Occasions appeal'd to their Authority.

thority as such. From whence it appears, that our Saviours taking notice of this Error, if it had been one, would have been much more beneficial to after Ages, than his Confuting an Unwritten Tradition could be.

But further, we find the Apostles Judgment does evidently concur with our Saviours in this matter. St. Paul says, that *the Jews* ^{a Rom. 3.} *were intrusted* ^{b in tru-} *with the Oracles of* ^{2. God.} God: but surely he would have told us that they were not True to their Trust, if he had thought they had mix'd Prophane Books with the Sacred ones. But that Text of the same Apostle, ^{c 2 Tim.} *All Scripture is given by Inspiration of* ^{3. 16.} God, is so clear a Proof of the Apostles Judgment in this matter, that 'twill admit of no Evasion. For the Apostle tells *Timothy* in the foregoing Verse, that *from a child he had known the Scriptures*, by which he must mean the Body of Writings which the Jews look'd upon as such, for in that Religion he had been Educated by the

O Care

Care of his mother, who was a Jewess^d. Then it follows in this verse, *All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God*: where the Apostle certainly understands the word Scripture in the same sense which he took it in the Verse before, *viz.* for that Collection of Writings which the Jews received as the Word of God. But pray let us hear our Authors Paraphrase * upon these two Verses, *It is as if he had said to Timothy, that he ought to keep close as he had done hitherto, to the Study of the Old Testament, which would instruct him sufficiently in the way of Salvation, by joyning thereunto Faith in Christ Jesus: because all Scripture Inspired, AS IS A GREAT PART OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, Is profitable for Instruction.* I think I may appeal to any Indifferent Man, whether those words of this Paraphrase, [*As is a great part of the Old Testament*] be not added meerly to serve the present Turn, without the least Intimation of such a Restriction from the Text it self: and whether the Coherence

^d Act. 16.
1.

* Eng. p.
192.
Fr. p.
270.

herence of these two Verses be not plainly this, "Continue in the Study of the Old Testament, because all the Books which that consists of are Divinely Inspir'd. But I suppose he grounds this Interpretation of his upon that Reading of the Text, for which *Grotius* vouches the *Syriack* and *Vulgar* f In locum. & contr. Rivetum. Translations, *Omnis Scriptura Divinitus Inspirata utilis est.* But if we should admit of this Reading, still the Sense will come all to one, and the Words as they lie then, tho they do not in Express terms assert, that all the Old Testament Writings are Divinely Inspir'd, yet they Imply it and take it for granted. For if we read the *Greek* thus, *ἄνθρωπος λογικός θεοπνεύματος ἀδίδακτος ἐστίν*, the word *θεοπνεύματος* will be an Explicative Epithet to *λογικός*, just as if we add the Epithet *Rationalis* to *Homo* in such a Proposition as this, *Homo Rationalis creatus est ad colendum Deum.* In which Proposition tho it be not expressly asserted that *Homo* is *Rationalis*, yet so much is Implied, and if it were

g Pars 2.
c. 5.

b Votum
pro Pace,
prout
citatur.
Fr. p. 170.
Fn. p. 193.

not true, 'twould make the whole Proposition false, as *Monsieur Nicol* has observed in his *Ars Cogitandi* &. And just so in the Proposition we speak of, *ῥαφῆ* signifies the Scriptures of the Old Testament, in which sense the word is always taken in the New Testament, and *ἡ σύνθεσις* is added for a fuller Explication of that term. I know *Grotius*^h will needs have the word *ῥαφῆ* taken here in its General Sense, and signify simply a Book or Writing. But I can't forbear saying, that this gloss is Unworthy of *Grotius*, and 'tis a sign of a Bad Cause, when so Great a Man is fain to betake himself to such Pitiful Sophistry, as is to be seen in the fore-cited Place. For he can't produce one Instance in all the New Testament, where the word is used in that Sense: and if he could, yet *ἡ σύνθεσις* added to *ῥαφῆ*, sufficiently Restrains the General sense of it, and makes one *Complex Term*, which must signify the same with *ἡ σύνθεσις ῥαφῆ* in the *Verse* before, both which Expressions signify the Old Testament, because 'tis a Collection

lection of Inspir'd Writings: and consequently the Phrase it self asserts so much by way of Implication, or else it would be an Improper Expression.

I think it appears from what has been said, what was the Judgement of Christ and his Apostles concerning the Canon of the Old Testament: and since 'tis certain that they approved the Canon of the Old Testament, as it was received by the Jewish Church of their own time, I can't guess what evidence of Reason can be sufficient to perswade a Christian to Oppose such an Authority. And therefore I can't be of our Author's mind, when he tell usⁱ, *He knows not why we may not doubt of the Books of the Old Testament, as well as of some of the New, the Authority of several of the Latter having been question'd.* But there is a visible Difference between the Authorities that confirm the Old Testament Canon, and those which give Testimony to the New. To the Former Christ and his Apostles bear Witness, whereas the Credit

ⁱ Eng. p.

188.

Fr. p. 267.

of the Latter depends upon the Consent and Testimony of much the Greater part of the Church in the Ages succeeding that of the Apostles: which tho it be sufficient for any Wise and Unprejudic'd Man to ground his assent upon, yet it hath not that Sacredness and Infallibility in it which the other hath. For those Ages made use only of Humane Means for settling the New Testament Canon, which was sufficient for that purpose, considering the Nearness of those times to the Writing of the Books to which they give Testimony.

* Fr. p.
276.
En. p. 102.

Nor does the name of *Chetubim*, which the Jews give to those Writings of the Old Testament, which Mr. N. calls in question, at all justify his Opinion. He fancies* they were call'd *Chetubim*, i. e. *Simply Writings*, as he Interprets it, to signify that they were like other Humane Writings, and had nothing at all of Inspiration in them. But the Jewish Writers say not one Syllable to confirm this Opinion, that

that I can find. On the contrary, by their placing *Daniel* among the *Chetubim*, it appears that they look upon the Writers of that Class to have been Inspir'd, for the Jews all agree that *Daniel* had really the Gift of Prophecy, tho they fancy it to be in a lower Degree. Further *Maimonides* saith expressly¹ that they are called *Chetubim*; *quia scripta sunt per Spiritum Sanctum*. And tho he reckons that Impulse which he calls *Spiritus Sanctus*, inferiour to the Degree of Inspiration which *Isaiah* and the other Prophets properly so call'd, had: yet 'tis plain that he looks upon it as a proper kind of Inspiration, for the instances he gives of it are, by his own Confession, real Inspirations^m. So that I do not see how *Maimonides*, take his Explanation altogether, gives any Advantage to this Opinion, tho *Grotius*ⁿ quote him for it. The Jews do indeed acknowledge a Difference between the Inspiration of the *Hagiographa* and the Prophetical Writings, but this doth not

¹ More
Nevoch.
p. 2. c. 45.

^m See Mr.
Smiths
Discourse
of Pro-
phesy.
c. 7.

ⁿ *Votum*
propace,
prout ci-
tatur, Fr.
p. 231.
Eng. p.
141.

prove them to be no part of the Scripture: for I think there is no body that considers the manner of the Spirit's Operation upon the Minds of Inspir'd Persons, but will readily acknowledge that there's no need of the same Degree of Inspiration, to write a History or a Book of Morality, as is requisite to make a Prophet. But concerning the different Degrees of Inspiration, I have discours'd already in several places of this Treatise, and shall have Occasion to speak of it hereafter.

But if the Jewish Division of the Old Testament favour'd Mr. N's Opinion never so much, I do not see any Force at all in the Argument taken from thence: for that Division is not of so early a Date, as to be able to vye with the much Ancienter Opinion concerning the Inspiration of the whole Jewish Canon. St. *Jerom* is the first that I find takes notice of this Division*: the placing the Prophet *Daniel* among the *Chetubim* in this Division, besides that there

* Prolog.
Galeat.
Præf. in
Dan 9.

there is no shadow of Reason for it, except it be that the Jews bear him a Spight for Prophecyng so plainly of our Saviour, discovers that 'tis of no long standing, since 'tis contrary to the Sense of the Ancient Jews. For *Josephus* often calls *Daniel a Prophet* ^p, *nay one of* ^{p Antiq.} *the greatest* ^{l. 10. c. 12.} *Prophets.* And agreeably to the Received Opinion, ^{9 lb. p.} our Saviour gives him the same ^{353. G.} Title ^{Ed Ge-}. But further, the same ^{nev.} *Josephus* ^{r Matth.} makes use of another Division of the Old Testament Writings, ^{24. 15.} *viz.* into the *Books of Moses*, ^{L. 1. c.} the *Prophetical*, ^{App. p.} (under which he comprehends the Historical, because they were writ by Prophets, as he with very good Reason supposes) and the *Poetical Books*, as they are commonly call'd, or *those which contain Hymns to God, and Precepts of good Life.* Which Division agrees much better with that mention'd by our Saviour, ^{24. 44} *viz.* into the *Books of Moses*, the *Prophets*, and the *Psalms*, than the other which the Jews have since that time Invented.

Thus

Thus far I have shew'd that Mr. N. by rejecting some of the Receiv'd Books of the Jewish Canon, rejects the Authority of the whole Jewish and Christian Church, nay and of Christ and his Apostles too. What Reasons he has for this we shall see by and by, but at present let us examine what Authority he has to oppose to such a Powerful one, as all these join'd together amount to. And I can find no body that stands by him in this Opinion but *Grotius*, and him he calls in to his Assistance at every Turn. But tho I have a great value for *Grotius's* Judgment, yet I think if it be laid in the Balance to counterpoise that of Christ and his Apostles, 'twill be found too Light. That Great man's Extraordinary Learning and Merits, and particularly his having so well deserv'd of several Parts of Scripture, and given such Light into their true Sense and Design, makes me willing to pass over his Failures, and not be severe upon his Memory for those False Glosses,
and

and some of them deserve a Harder Name, which he has made upon other Books of it. Only I can't but observe, that this Opinion of his, concerning the Old Testament Canon, is very Inconsistent with the Main Design of his *Votum pro Pace*, and those other Treatises where he has asserted it. For the Great Design of those *Projects for Peace*, is to magnify Antiquity, Tradition, and the Authority of the Church, and to shew that Catholick Unity is never to be restor'd, but by submitting all Controversies to the Decision of these three, as so many Arbitrators or Umpires between the different Parties. And yet at the same time when he Pleads for the Authority of the Church, of Antiquity and Tradition, he Rejects those Books which have all the Authority that the Universal Church, Uninterrupted Tradition, and the Consent of all the Ancients, both Jews and Christians can give them.

II. I come now in the Second Place to consider the *Exceptions which our Author makes, against Particular Books of the Old Testament*: and the Books he Excepts against are either *Historical*, or those they commonly call *Poetical*.

As to the Historical Writings I agree with him thus far, that the Sacred Historians were not usually Inspir'd with the things themselves which they relate, nor with the Words by which they Express the things. But I think I have prov'd in
 *P. 37. the First Chapter^a of this Treatise, that a Book may be written by God's Direction, and yet not without the Use of Humane means. And as there is no Reason to think, that God Inspir'd the *Evan-gelists* with the Knowledge of those Passages of our Saviour's Life, which they themselves were Eye-witnesses of, or might easily learn from those that were so: so 'tis every whit as groundless to suppose, that God Reveal'd those Particulars to the Writers of the Old Testament History, which they
 could

could come to the Knowledge of
 by Consulting the Records and
 Ancient Monuments, in which
 these Matters were related. But
 notwithstanding this, 'twill appear
 that these Books were writ by
 God's Direction, and Design'd by
 him for the Use of the Church,
 if we consider what Mr. N. himself
 grants *, *That they were not writ* x Fr. p.
231.
meerly to satisfy our Curiosity, but to En. p. 28.
be a standing proof of a Providence
to after Ages, to shew us the Care
that God always takes of Good Peo-
ple, and the Punishments he inflicts
upon the Wicked: to give us Examples
of Piety and Vertue, and lastly to
inform us of several Matters of Fact,
which tend very much to confirm our
Faith, as containing many Types
 and Predictions of our Saviour.
 To which we may add, that setting
 aside the Squabbles between F.
 Simon and his Adversaries, about
 the Scribes and Keepers of the Pub-
 lick Registers of the Jews, 'tis highly
 probable, that the Prophets usually
 writ the Histories of their Kings,
 and those Books which are so
 often

often quoted under the name of the *Chronicles of the Kings of Judah and Israel*, and were Annals from whence the Substance of the Books of *Kings* and *Chronicles* are taken. For we find a Considerable part of the History of *Hezekiah* Incorporated into *Isaiah's* Prophecy ^a, which is a Strong Presumption that the whole History of that King's Reign, was Recorded by the same Hand. And indeed so much is expressly asserted *2 Chron.* 32. 32. So the Acts of *David* were Recorded by *Samuel* the Seer, by *Nathan* the Prophet, and by *Gad* the Seer ^b. The Acts of *Solomon* were written in the Book of *Nathan* the Prophet, in the Prophecy of *Abijah* the *Shilonite*, and in the Visions of *Iddo* the Seer ^c. The History of *Rehoboam's* Reign was written by *Shemaiah* the Prophet, and by *Iddo* the Seer in his *Genealogies* ^d: the last of these Recorded likewise the Acts of *Abijah Rehoboam's* Son ^e. *Jehu* the Son of *Hanani* who was a Prophet ^f, writ the History of *Jehoshaphat* ^g. The Acts
of

^a If. c. 36,
37, 38, 39.

^b 1 Chr.
29. 29.

^c 2 Chr.
9. 29.

^d 2 Chr.
12. 15.

^e Chap.
13. 22.

^f 1 King.
16. 1.

^g 2 Chron.
19. 2.

^g 2 Chr.
20. 34.

of *Uzziah* were Recorded by the Prophet *Isaiah* ^h: and those of *Manasses* among the sayings of the *Seers* ⁱ. To the same purpose I think we may most probably Interpret those words of *Josephus* ^k, which have been so often quoted of late upon this Subject, where he tells us, that the *Histories of the Jewish Nation were writ only by Prophets, and therefore they look upon none of them as Authentick, which were writ after Artaxerxes's time, because there was no Clear and Undoubted Succession of Prophets in the following Ages.* Nor is *Huetius's* Objection ^l against this Passage of *Josephus* of any Weight, who affirms that *Josephus* Contradicts what he had said but just before, viz. *That the Chief Priests as well as the Prophets, had the Care of Writing the Publick Histories committed to them.* But that Learned Man seems not to have attended to the whole Scope and Design of *Josephus* in that place. For that Historian does not say, that the Writing of the Publick Histories, was committed

to

^h Ch. 26.

22.

ⁱ Ch. 33.

19.

^k *Joseph.*

^{c.} *Appion.*

^{l.} 1. p.

1036. Ed.

Genev.

^l *Demon.*

Evangel.

p. 161.

to the Chief Priests as well as the Prophets, but that the *Care of the Publick Records was committed to them* *. And if we take an Intire view of that Section, we shall find that *Josephus* speaks, not only of the manner how the Histories of Former times were written, but likewise how they were Preserved after they are writ. The Care of writing them was committed to the Prophets, as the other Passage assures us, not Excluding those Priests who had the Gift of Prophecy: the Preserving them he here tells us, was particularly the Business of the Priests, who likewise exactly Preserved the Genealogies of their Nation, and renewed them when the Copies were Impair'd, and in danger to be all lost by Wars and other Accidents, and therefore were lookt upon as the Keepers of the Publick Records. Whence is it that the same Author usually calls the Holy Writings,

Which

* τῶν πρῶ-
των γραφῶν
ἐπιμελίας,
τῆς ἀρχι-
ερεῶν καὶ τῆς
Προφητείας
τοῦτο ἀνε-
στρέφεται.

m Antiq. τὰς ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ ἀνακειμένας γραφάς ^m,
p.73. G. The Books laid up in the Temple un-
p.140. A. der the Custody of the Priests.
p.176. G.

Which was agreeable to the Customs of the Neighbouring Countries: for so *Philo Byblius* <sup>n Ap. Eu-
seb. Præp. Evang. l. 1</sup> says of *Sanchuniathon*, that he Collected the *Phenician* Antiquities, ἐκ τῶν ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς ἀναγεγραμμένων, out of the Records laid up in their Temples.

But to return to our Subject, From those many Instances I have given, which shew 'twas a Custom among the Jews for the Prophets to be their Historians, we may conclude that the Historical Books of the Old Testament were writ by Men who had the Gift of Prophecy and Inspiration: and tho we suppose them to be but Abridgements of the larger Commentaries of the Prophets, yet they are really of as much Authority as those very Annals would be which were writ by the Prophets themselves, if they were extant. For if an *Epitome* be faithfully made (and I suppose Mr. N. does not question the Fidelity of the Sacred Historians) whatever is contained in it, hath the same Authority and Credibility with the Original Writing. So that if we lay

all these things together, the Character of the Compilers of these Historical Books, the Matter and Design of them, the Authority of the Jewish Canon, and above all that of Christ and his Apostles, these are sufficient Inducements to believe these Books to be Written by God's Direction for the Benefit of the Church. And this I think is enough to give Divine Authority to an Historical Book, tho neither the Matter nor Words of it be indited by Inspiration.

As for the History of *Esther* Mr. N. has taken much pains^o, and shewed a great deal of Skill in the Rules of *Dramatick* Poesy, and all to prove that this Book looks like a Fiction and a piece of *Tragi-Comedy*. He indeed tells us, that he *affirms nothing in this matter, and does not intend to make himself a Party in the Dispute*. But a man would hardly take so much pains to make anothers Opinion look probable, if he did not think it so himself. But whatever his own Sentiments be, to shew himself Impartial, and that

o Fr. p.
164, &c.
Eng. p.
249

that he is resolv'd not to conceal any thing that may be said on the other side, he Critically remarks ^P that one Condition, necessary to ^{p Eng. p.} be observ'd in Dramatick Writings, is wanting, ^{169.} viz. ^{Fr. p.} *Unity of* ^{252.} *Time and Place*, which must needs seem a considerable Objection to so nice a Judge. But besides this, there's another Objection which I confess has more Weight with me, and seems quite to turn the Scales, and make his Remarks appear meer Fancy and Fiction, viz. that the Feast of *Purim* was really observed by the Jews, in memory of the Deliverance recorded in this Book. And 'twill be a hard matter to make me believe that a whole Nation should keep an Anniversary Feast, as 'tis certain they did⁹, without some real Ground ^{q 2 Macc} for it. ^{15. 36.} And if this was not the true Occasion of it, as he seems to insinuate^r, I desire either he ^{r Eng. p.} would prove the Feast to be as ^{170.} very a Fiction, as he supposes the ^{Fr. p.} History is, or else inform us how ^{253.} the whole Nation of the Jews

came to be so far impos'd upon, as to observe it : for till he does one of these two things, I shall still be of opinion, that the one was a Real Feast, and the other a True History.

But tho this Play does not succeed, he is resolv'd not to give over, but try his Skill upon another Subject, and turn the Book of *Job* into a *Tragi-Comedy*^f. And I confess this Book is made according to the Rules of Poetry, and with all the Beauties of it too, as an Ordinary Reader may easily discover under all the Disadvantages of a Translation. And therefore methinks our Author, who understands the Rules and *Decorums* of Poetry so well, should not be offended with those Pathetic Strains, that are in the *third Chapter*, and some other places of that Book : for tho we should grant that they would not become a grave Philosophical Discourse, yet I believe he might have found several Speeches in the *Old Tragedies* written with as much Vehemence and

/Fr. p.
224
Eng. p.
99.

ad

and Warmth. And yet the severest Philosophers commended those Writings, and look'd upon them as containing very useful Instructions of Life. And I see no Reason why God might not in this as well as other things, suffer the Holy Writers to comply so far with their own Genius, and the Humour which then prevail'd among the grave Sages of the World, as to deliver Great and Weighty Truths in Poetical numbers and Expressions, both to recommend them to the more Curious and Nice Readers, and to convince the Wise men of the World, who are apt to despise the Plainness of the Scriptures, that there are to be found as Elevated Thoughts, and as Noble Expressions in the Holy Writings, as any *Greece* or *Rome* can boast of: and therefore when they use a plain popular Style, 'tis not out of Necessity but Choice, and because they rather aim at the Instruction of the ignorant, than to gain Applause from the Learned^t. But still men

^t V. Orig.
c. Cels. p.
275, 371,
372. Ed.
Cant.

perhaps will be ready to say, that these Expressions may do well in a Profane Poem, but are not so proper for a Sacred one, and do not become the mouth of a Person eminent for Piety and Patience. In answer to which, I would desire the Objectors in the first place to consider that the Substance of the 3^d Chapter of this Book, which so much offends Mr. N. ^u when 'tis taken in its Plain Sense, without those Stroaks of Passion which are meerly Poetical Ornaments, is no more but this, "That 'tis better never to have
 "been Born than to live in a
 "great deal of Misery, and that
 "there is this Benefit in Death,
 "that it puts an End to the
 "Troubles which are incident to
 "Humane Life. And this seems not unfit to be spoken by a Wise and Good man. In the next place I would desire them to reflect upon those many Excellent Sayings in this Book, which are most Devout Expressions of *Jobs* Patience, Submission, and Resignation to
 the

^u Fr. p.
 275.
 Eng. p.
 100.

the Will of God ^x, and of his Trust and Confidence in him ^y in the midst of Afflictions, grounded upon the Testimony of a Good Conscience and the Sense of his own Integrity ^z. And if they readily acknowledge that upon these Accounts *Job's* Behaviour is worthy to be recorded for an Example of Integrity, of Sufferings, and of Patience, let them withal consider that the other parts of the Book which seem more liable to Exception, are of use to teach us, that the best of men are subject to the Passions and Infirmities to which Humane Nature is obnoxious, and are not able to bear up against the First Assaults of Afflictions, and the sudden and sharp Twinges of Pain, till they have recollected their Strength, arm'd themselves with new Vigour and Resolution, and have encourag'd themselves in God, and call'd in the Divine Assistance. Thus we find the Spirit of the *Psalmist* stir'd in him at the Consideration of the Prosperity of the Wicked ^a, and tempted to that

^x Job. 1.
21. - 2. 10.
c. 9. 2, 3,
15.
c. 40. 4, 5.
c. 42. 3,
&c.
^y 1b. c. 13.
15. - 14.
13, 14, 15,
- 19. 25,
26, 27.
^z c. 23. 3,
&c.
c. 29. 31.
per tot.
- 27. 3,
&c.

^a Pf. 73.

Degree of Impatience, as to begin
 to say, *'Twas in vain to serve God*^b:
 but he presently checks such
 thoughts as unbecoming a Religi-
 ous man^c. And I question not
 but God was pleas'd that those Ex-
 pressions of *Job* in which he seems
 to forget his Character, should be
 Recorded as well as the Infirmities
 of other his eminent Servants, on
 purpose to shew us that they had
 the Heavenly *Treasure* of Grace in
Earthen Vessels, and thereby teach
 us to cease from valuing *Man*, for
wherein is he to be accounted of? and
 to give God the Glory, and Mag-
 nify the Power of his Grace, *whose*
Strength is made perfect in Weakness,
 and more eminently seen in the
 midst of Humane Infirmities.

And notwithstanding these Ex-
 pressions, 'tis no such unaccountable
 thing as our Author supposes^d, that
 the Writer of this Book should bring
 in God Almighty approving what
Job had said, and condemning the
 Assertions of his Friends^e. For
 we find that just before *'Job*
 had begg'd Pardon for his Rash
 Speeches

^b Ib. v.
 13. 14.

^c Ib. v. 15.

^d Fr. p.
 275.
 En. p. 101.

^e Job.
 42. 7.
 flb ver.
 3, 6.

Speeches in a most Submissive manner. And as to the main of the Dispute, *Job* certainly was in the Right: for *the Design of the Book*, as our Author & himself confesses, ^{2 Fr. p. 275.} *is to shew by Job's Example, that God oftentimes Afflicts Good People, not to punish them for any particular Sin, as if they had deserv'd Afflictions more than others; but simply to try them, and give them Occasion to shew their Vertue.* And this is what *Job* maintaines throughout the Dispute, and wherein he perfectly agrees with what our Saviour saith, on purpose to check Men's Rashness in taking upon them to Interpret God's Judgments, ^{b Luke 13. 2.} *Suppose ye that these Galileans, whose Blood Pilate mingled with their Sacrifices, were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffer'd these things? I tell you Nay.* Whereas *Job's* Friends all along go upon this Principle, that Good Men are always Prosperous, and none are Miserable ^{c Job 8. 8. c. 15. 10, 18. - 20. 4. & c. - 21. 15, 16.} but the Wicked: and to prove this they Appeal to Experience, the Histories of Former Ages ^e, and the

the Examples which their own
d c. 4. 7. Times furnisht them with^d. From
8, 9, 10. all which they don't only conclude,
11. as our Author Imperfectly Repre-
e Fr. p. sents it, ^e that *Job was afflicted for*
275. *his sins*, for if this had been all they
En p. 101 had maintain'd, *Job* would never
have contested the matter with
them, for he freely acknowledges
his sins, and owns that they de-
f Job serve Punishment^f. But that
7. 20, 21. which they contend for is, that
-9. 14, 15. *Job* must needs be a Grievous Sin-
ner, and Greater than other Men,
however he had made a Shift to
conceal his Wickedness from the
Eyes of the World, or else he had
never been so terribly Afflicted.
Nay, *Eliphaz* is so confident that
it must be some Extraordinary
Wickedness that had brought down
these heavy Judgements upon him,
that at last he ventures to give a
Catalogue of *Job's* Sins^g, for which
g Job 22. God had thus Afflicted him. 'Twas
5, &c. this Uncharitable Behaviour of
theirs provok'd *Job* to Impatience,
more than all the rest of his Af-
flictions: 'twas upon this account
he

he tells them, that *they had Reproached him ten times, had vexed his soul, and broke him in pieces with words*^h: this makes him so often ^b Job protest his Innocency, and appeal ^{19. 2, 3.} to God to Judge him, *according to the Integrity that was in him*ⁱ. And here I think *Job's Friends* were ^{21.} very faulty, not only in pro- ^{i c. 16. 17.} nouncing so rashly concerning the ^{c. 27. 5, 6.} Reasons of Providence and of ^{c. 31. per tot.} God's Judgements, but likewise in ^{c. 23. 3, &c.} passing such Unkind and Uncharitable Censures upon their Friend, whereas they ought to have had ^k pity upon him, as he tells them ^{k c. 19.} *since the Hand of God had toucht him,* ^{21, 22.} and not persecute him as God, and add Affliction to the Afflicted. And this their Confidence in taking upon them to be Interpreters of God's Judgements, together with their Uncharitable and Inhumane Behaviour toward a Man in Affliction, might justly provoke God's Wrath against them for what they had said, when at the same time he pardon'd the Impatient and Undecent Expressions of *Job*, be-
cause

cause he could plead the Infirmary of Humane Nature in his own behalf, which is easily provok'd to be Impatient under violent Afflictions, especially where Men *persecute those whom God has smitten*: whereas *Job's* Friends had no such excuse to alledge for themselves.

But still it may be Demanded, Upon what account we Reckon this Book to be Inspir'd? In Answer to which Question, I shall crave leave to deliver my Opinion Freely, but with all due Submission to Better Judgements. I suppose therefore that this Book is not to be reckon'd Inspir'd, upon the account of the Persons who maintain the Dispute in it: and tho I question not, but that they were Extraordinary Men for Piety and Vertue, yet I see no Reason to believe that either *Job* or his Friends spoke every thing which they say, by Inspiration. As to the Latter, the Case is plain, for God himself says, that *they had not spoken of him the thing that is right* ¹. And even *Job* himself, tho he maintain'd

tain'd the Right side in the Controversy, yet now and then is guilty of too vehement Expostulations ^m with God Almighty, he stands too much upon his own Justification, ⁿ and Vindication of his Innocency, and takes upon him to Censure the Methods of Providence too freely ^o; for which Faults we find afterwards he earnestly begs God's Pardon, and ^p *Repents of them in Dust and Ashes.* I willingly acknowledge what the Jews themselves allow ^q, (tho they are very Jealous of giving this Honour to any that are not of their own Nation) that *Job and his Friends were Prophets among the Gentiles.* And indeed there's reason to grant this: for we find *Eliphaz* himself professes, that he had a Night-vision ^r, which was not altogether ^s unusual in those days. But *Job* had the Gift of Prophecy in a more Eminent manner, as appears, not only from that Famous Passage of his ^t, *I know that my Redeemer lives,* &c. which *St. Jerom* ^u justly calls, *a Prophecy of the Resurrection*; but also

^m c. 7.
11, &c.
ⁿ 10. 2.
^o c. 7. 17.
10. 7.
16. 17.
13. 23.
^p eec. 33.
9. 10, 11.
34. 5, 6.
^q c. 9. 22,
23.
19. 7.
23. 13.
^r c. 42.
3, &c.
^s See Bp. Patrick's Appendix to his Paraphrase.
^t Job 4.
13.
^u See c. 33. 15, 16.
^v Job 19.
25, 26, 27
^w In locum.

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vidence too freely ^o; for which ^{-16. 17.}
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are very Jealous of giving this ^{23.}
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a Prophecy of the Reſurrection; but ^{33. 15, 16.}
alſo ^{t Job 19:}
^{25, 26, 27}
^{a In lo-}
^{cum.}

x Job
 31. 8. also because God spake x to him
 by a Voice from Heaven, and 'tis
 7 c. 42. 5. probable he saw a *Shekinah* y, or
 Visible Appearance of the Divine
 Glory. But allowing all this, I see no
 proof that the Discourses set down
 in this Book, ought to be lookt
 upon as spoken by the Spirit of
 Prophecy: and therefore the In-
 spiration of the Book it self, seems
 to me to consist in this, viz. As
 'tis an Historical account of *Job's*
 Behaviour before, and under his
 Afflictions, and of his happy Issue
 out of them all, together with his re-
 flections and the discourses he had
 with his Friends upon that Occasi-
 on, written by God's Direction for
 the Use of his Church, to be an Ex-
 ample of Patience under Sufferings,
 and a Vindication of God's Pro-
 vidence in permitting the Righte-
 ous to be Afflicted. And since by
 Reason of the Antiquity of the
 Book, the Author is not certainly
 known, and Consequently we can-
 not Argue that 'tis Inspired, from
 the Character of its Author; the
 Evidence for its being Inspired, or
 Writ-

Written by God's Direction for the Use of the Church, must be Resolved into the Authority of the Jewish Canon, as that is confirmed to us by Christ and his Apostles, and this Book particularly Recommended by St. *James*², to the Use of Christians: especially since the Design of it does exactly Answer the Character which St. *Paul*^a gives of the Old Testament Writings in General, viz. *That they were written for our Instruction, that we thro Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures might have Hope.* ^{a James 5. 11. a Rom. 15. 4.}

And thus much I think may suffice, in Answer to Mr. N's Objections against the Book of *Job*. I shall only add, that besides the Powerful Comforts this Book affords to the Afflicted, and the submission it teaches us to yield to God's Will, and to Adore the Unsearchableness of his Judgements, which are the principal and obvious Designs of this Book, 'tis likewise of excellent Use upon another account, viz. as it gives us a True Idea of *Natural Religion*^b, when ^{b See c. 31.}

when it was in its Prime, and as it was practis'd in those early Ages, before the Tradition of the Creation was lost, or the World quite overrun with Idolatry.

b Fr. p.
230.
Eng. p.
27.

I proceed in the next place to consider what our Author alledges against the Book of *Psalms*: His Opinion concerning these in general is, ^b“ *That there was no need* “ *of Inspiration, but only of Piety* “ *and Zeal for the composing them*: and he further says, “ *That any* “ *Devout man may easily now-a-days* “ *praise God in that manner*. But all the Pious men that ever were in the Christian Church have been of another mind, and never look'd upon their own Composures as Equal to the *Psalms*: whereas if the Authors of the *Psalms* were assisted only with an Ordinary Degree of Piety and Devotion, I can not see why the members of the Christian Church should not think themselves as well qualified to make Hymns to God, as any of the Jewish that were no more than

than Pious and Devout men. But
 faith Mr. N. ^c *David never saith,* ^{c Ubi sup.}
Thus saith the Lord, as the Pro- ^{&c Fr. p.}
 phets who speak by God's Autho- ^{277.}
 rity use to do. Now tho it be false ^{Eng. p.}
 that *David* never uses this Expres- ¹⁰⁴
 sion, for in several places he uses
 those very Words, or such as are
 Equivalent ^d: yet if 'twere true, I ^{d 1 Sam.}
 do not see what Service 'twould ^{23. 2.}
 do Mr. N. unless he can prove that ^{Psal. 2. 7.}
 Praising God by Inspiration, is the ^{110. 1}
 same as Delivering a Message from
 him and Instructing the people in
 his Name, which is the only pro-
 per occasion to usher in what is
 said with, *Thus saith the Lord*. ^{e see Mr.}
 Sure Mr. N. thinks that because we ^{Smith of}
 grant Prophecy to be the Highest ^{Prophe-}
 Degree of Inspiration, therefore ^{cy, c. 7.}
 there can be really no other sort.
 But I am much mistaken if St.
Paul was not of another mind,
 when he said with Relation to
 the Diversity of Spiritual Gifts,
Are all Apostles, are all Prophets ^{f 1 Cor.}
And If the foot shall say, because I am ^{12. 29.}
not the hand I am not of the body, is
it therefore not of the body? ^{g lb. v.}
 And ^{15.}

Q

we

we may easily apply the Apostles Reasoning to our present Case on this manner, " If Mr. N. shall say, " Because Composing of Psalms " and Hymns is not Prophecyng, " nor bringing a Message from " God 'tis not Inspiration, is it " therefore not Inspiration? On the contrary 'tis plain that the Holy Writers look'd upon Praising God by Spiritual Songs, when 'twas perform'd by Gifted Persons as a Real and Distinct sort of Inspiration, and therefore call'd it Prophefying^b, as that word is taken in a large Sense for Inspiration in General.

b 1 Sam.
10. 5.
1 Chr.
25. 1.
1 Cor.
11. 5.
Exod.
15. 20.
See Mr.
Smith of
Prophe-
cy, ch. 7.
and 8.
And Dr.
Hau-
mond up-
on St.
Luke 1.
67.

And methinks without Descant-
ing so Nicely upon the several
Degrees of Divine Inspiration, and
Weighing God's Gifts in a Balance,
to try if they can be found *Wanting*,
as our Author does; this might be
sufficient to convince Men, that
God Design'd the Book of Psalms
for the Perpetual Use of the
Church, *viz.* That the Psalms have
been one of the most considerable
parts of the Publick Worship, both
in

in the Jewish and Christian Church ever since they were madeⁱ: they were always us'd at the time of offering the Sacrifices, which was the most solemn part of the Jewish Worship^k. *Exra* restored this Service as soon as the Foundation of the Second Temple was laid^l. The Evangelists tell us^m, that our Saviour and his Disciples *Sung a Hymn* after the *Paschal* Supper, which Learned Men suppose to have been the same Collection of Psalms, which the Jews used upon that Solemnity. St. *Paul* Exhorts the *Colossians* that the *Word of God* should dwell richly in them, and especially recommends the Psalms to their useⁿ. The Visions in the *Revelations*, where Saints and Angels are represented Worshipping and Praising God, do certainly in many things allude to the Customs^o which the Jewish and Christian Church at that time used in their Publick Service; which two Churches then differ'd very little in the manner of their External Worship. And in these we

ⁱ See
1 Chr.
6. 31.
^k 1 Chr.
15. 40, 41.
Ecclus.
50. 16,
17, 18.
^l Ezr. 3.
11.
^m Matt.
26. 30.
Mark
14. 26.

ⁿ Coloss.
3. 16.

^o See
Rev. 4.
ver. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12

p Rev.
5.9. -14.
3. -15. 3.

q V. Cl.
Dodwel.
c. *Grot.*
c. 4.

r 1 Cor.
14. 26.
Euseb.
H.E. 1.5.
c. 28. &
l. 7. c. 30.
f See Dr.
Hamn.
Preface
to his
Paraphr.
upon the
Psalms.

find the Heavenly Devotions consist altogether of Hymns, and Songs of Praise ^r, which is a good Argument to prove, that the Singing of Psalms was the most considerable part of the Christian Worship in that Early Age ^q, as it had formerly been of the Jewish. I deny not but in that Inspir'd Age they used several Hymns of their own Composing ^r; yet 'tis certain from the Testimony of many Ancient Writers ^r, that *David's* Psalms still were most in use, and in highest esteem. And this is one Argument of it, *viz.* because all the Hymns Compos'd by the Ancient Christians have been lost time out of mind, except very few, which can be attributed to nothing so probably, as to the Disuse of them, by reason of the more Frequent and Constant Use of the Book of Psalms. And 'tis not likely the Christian Church would have been beholding to the Jewish Temple for their Forms of Worship, (especially when we consider how much more Noble a Subject for Praises and

and Hymns the Christians had, by the Clear Revelation of the Gospel) if they had not been perswaded that God design'd the Book of Psalms for the perpetual Use of the Church, to be both a Pattern and Treasure of Devotions, at once to Enlighten our Minds, and Warm our Affections, and teach us to Pray and Praise God *with the Spirit, and with the understanding also.* And if what I have said, prove that this was God's Intent in stirring up Holy Men to make these Excellent Pieces of Devotion, I think 'twill be sufficient to satisfy any Reasonable Man, that the Book of Psalms deserves a place among the Inspir'd Writers, without Nicely determining how great a share the Holy Spirit had in making these Composures, and how much is to be ascribed to the Authors own Study and Meditation. Since 'tis very hard in any Case, to Define the manner how God's Grace does Cooperate with Man's Indeavours, and the Spirit, like the Wind to

1 John
3. 8.

which our Saviour compares it¹, does sufficiently discover it self by its effects, tho we can't Comprehend the Manner of its Operation. And 'tis no wonder that should not be easily Intelligible by us, who are Ignorant how our own Soul acts within us, and after what manner Outward Objects make an Impression upon it.

2 Fr. p.
228.
1. n. p. 23.

But saith Mr. N. ² the *Imprecations which are found in many of the Psalms, can't proceed from the Good and Merciful Spirit of God*, and consequently the Authors of those Psalms could not be Inspir'd.

This being the only Considerable Objection against the Psalms, to take off all Prejudice against the Use of so Excellent a Book, I shall endeavour to give a distinct Answer to it, in these Three particulars.

1. In the First place therefore, I desire it may be Observed, that *many of those Expressions which seems at first Sight to import Wishing Mischief and Destruction to others, do really wish no more harm to them, than that*

a Pfal.
70. 2.
יבשׁוּ
יִחְזְרוּ
which is
Synony-
mous
with the
Former,
and ren-
dred by
the
LXX.
καταστρε-
ψαι, ἀνα-
στρεψαι, κα-
ταστρεψαι
καὶ οὕ-
τως
all which
words
signify
Shame.

And if we take these Expressions in this Sense, then they imply no more than a Denouncing God's Judgements against Wicked Men, if they still persist in their Wickedness. And thus to Denounce the *Terrors of the Lord* against Sinners, is so far from being a piece of Uncharitableness, that 'tis the highest Act of Charity we can shew to them, and the most effectual means to awaken them to a sense of their Condition, and what they are to Expect except they Repent. And if this Interpretation be true, as nothing hinders but it may, then all Mr. N's Objections ^c against the 109th. *Psalms* vanish immediately; for according to this Interpretation, it only contains a Prediction of the Miseries that were to befall the Person, whoever he was, under whom *Judas* was Represented. And the Denunciation of the Psalmist against his Family, will be liable to no other Exceptions than that Prophecy of *Isaiah* against *Babylon*, ^d *Their children shall be dash'd in pieces before their*

^c Ub.
supr.

^d *Isaiah*
13. 16.

their eyes, their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished. And St. Peter himself seems to have understood this Psalm in no other sense, for he tells us ^a that the *Holy Ghost* [in this Psalm] *spoke before* or PROPHESED^t *by the mouth* ^f *of David concerning Judas.* But besides this, it was an Usual way of Speech among the Jews, to threaten or denounce Evils in the form of Imprecation. So the Comminations against those that broke the Law, were utter'd by way of Imprecation, *Cursed be he that* ^g *&c.* ^g Deut. 27. In like manner Excommunication was denounc'd in the Form of Imprecation, אָנָּתְהָמָא ^h : from whence the Apostle took that Expression, *Let him be Anathema* ^b. In the same sense we are to understand that Expression of St. Pauls concerning *Alexander the Coppersmith,* ⁱ *The Lord reward him according to his works.* The Reason of all which Expressions is to be taken from the promiscuous use of the Imperative and Future in the *Hebrew*, and a very little Acquaintance with

^a Acts 1.

16.

^f *of David.*^g Deut.

27.

^b Gal.

1. 8.

1. Cor.

16. 20.

ⁱ 2 Tim.

4. 14.

with that Language, will furnish a man with several Examples of this kind.

3. But Thirdly, if we understand these Expressions according to their common Acceptation and the Sense that is usually given of them, and suppose them to imply *Wishing evil to the Persons of whom they are spoken*, I cannot see but *'tis Lawful, nay our Duty in several Cases to pray to God against our Enemies*, and desire him to execute his Vengeance upon them: the Lawfulness of this I shall prove in these following Instances.

1. *Where 'tis not a Private Quarrel, but one of a Publick Nature, between two different Nations*, whether upon a Civil or Religious Account. For in this Case, as it is lawful for the Injur'd Party to endeavour to Right themselves by War, so they may certainly Pray to God that he would give them Success, and overthrow their Enemies: especially if their Attempts be levell'd against the True Religion, for then beside the Reasonable-

nableness of Praying to God to *maintain his own Cause*, we may Pray that the Enemies of it may meet with a Remarkable Disappointment, upon another Account too: because it will be a powerful Argument for their Conversion, and to bring them to the Acknowledgment of the Truth. To which purpose the Psalmist prays,
** Fill their faces with shame, O Lord, that they may seek thy Name.* And & Psal. 83. 16.
 accordingly those Psalms which were compos'd against the Enemies of the Jewish Church and Nation, may now lawfully be used against the Enemies of the True Religion, and of those that profess it: and we find they have all along been applied so in the Christian Church.

2. *'Tis lawful to pray against our Enemies, when they are the Disturbers of the Publick Peace.* For certainly the Charity which we owe to the Community lays upon us a Precedent and a higher Obligation than that which we owe to Private Persons, and therefore
 where

where these two interfere, the First Obligation must take place, and 'tis not only lawful but our Duty to shew no Kindness to Particular persons, where we cannot do it without Prejudice to the Publick. Or else I do not see how it would be consistent with Christian Charity to punish Malefactors: and sure Wishing Evil is not more contrary to the Rules of Charity than Inflicting it. Now many of the Imprecations which we find in the Psalms, are against the Disturbers of the Publick Peace, for they were not the Enemies of a Private man, but of *David* a King, and one of God's own Appointment too. And certainly in such Cases where men are bound to the utmost of their Ability, to bring Offenders to Condign Punishment, they may every whit as lawfully leave them to God's Judgment, and desire him to take the matter into his own Hand, and Reward them according to their Works. Especially if we consider that in *David's* Case, where a Sovereign

vereign Authority was Oppress'd and Injur'd by Wicked men, there no Court upon Earth could do him Right, for he that was appointed by God to be an *Avenger and to execute Wrath upon them that do Evil*, had this Power taken from him: so that in this Case 'twas very fit and just for him to Appeal to God, and desire that he would execute Judgment upon obstinate Offenders, who else would escape the Hand of Justice.

3. *Tis lawful to pray to God to send down Judgments upon our Enemies, when 'tis not likely they will be Reform'd by Gentler Methods.* Sinners often despise the Patience and Long-suffering of God, and take Incouragement from his Forbearance to go on in their Sins: and when nothing will work upon them but *Judgment and Fiery Indignation*, 'tis a piece of Charity to pray to God to correct them and bring them under the Rod, till they know that the *most High rules over the Children of men*. Thus the Psalmist prays to God against Hardened

1 Pſal.
59. 13.

ned Sinners, ' *Consume them in thy wrath that they may not be : and let them know that God rules in Jacob, and unto the Ends of the Earth.* This severe dealing with such persons will force them at last to Glorifie God, and others warn'd by their Examples, will be the more careful not to offend in such a manner.

And this leads me to the 4th and Last Instance I shall mention, wherein 'tis lawful to pray against our Enemies, and that is, *When Offenders are in all appearance Incorrigible and past Repentance.* When men have made themselves Un capable of God's Mercy, 'tis fit that God should be Glorified in them by making them Remarkable Instances of his Justice : and 'tis the Duty of every one that is Zealous of God's Glory, to desire and pray that he may get *Honour* by the Destruction of Hardned and Incorrigible Sinners, as he did by the Overthrow of *Pharaoh*^m : and likewise they ought to Rejoyce when they see it accomplish'd, And surely when

Exod.
14. 17.

when Charity has done her work, when Patience and Kindness cannot soften our Enemies, nor Prayers for their Conversion do any Good upon them, it seems very agreeable to the Doctrine of the Scriptures, that then we may pray God to execute his Vengeance upon them: as some of the Christians when they saw *Julian the Apostate's* Implacable Rage and Inveterate Malice against the Christian Religion, believing him to have Sinned the Sin unto Death, pray'd to God for his Destruction, that *all the Kingdoms of the Earth might know that Jesus whom Julian had reproched, was Lord and Christⁿ*. For the Scriptures when they teach us to be Patient and Forgive those that injure us, inforce this Duty upon us by this Argument, that *Vengeance belongs to God, and he will repayⁿ* in due time, and do us Justice. Which shews that after we have done what we can to reclaim our Enemies, and have indeavour'd to win them by Kindness,
if

n Greg.
Naz. 2.
Inveſt.
in *Jul. p.*
123, 124.
& Orat.
Funebr.
in Patr.
p. 308.
n Rom.
12. 19.

if they still continue Implacable,
 we may lawfully expect^r that God
 will plead our Cause, and tho we
 may not Right our selves, yet we
 may^a desire him to Interpose, and
 put a stop to the Successes of Wic-
 ked men, who grow outrageous
 and intolerable by Impunity: and
 we ought to commit our Cause to
 him, and rest satisfied with this
 Consideration, That God will in
 his due time *judge us according to*
our Righteousness^r. And that pas-
 sage, which the Apostle in the
 place above-mention'd quotes
 out of the *Proverbs* as a proof of
 what he says, does imply as much,
If thine Enemy hunger feed him, if
he thirst give him drink, for in so
doing thou shalt heap Coals of Fire
upon his head: i. e. "If thy Kind-
 ness does not reclaim him and
 make him thy Friend, but he
 still persist in his Enmity, God
 will vindicate his Cause: *metu enim Ultionis omnis iniqui-*
tas refranatur. q 2 Chron. 24. 22. *r* *Μετὰ τὴν*
ἀποκρίσιν ἐκείνην ἔτι καὶ ἐκείνην μὴ Κίεαν διὰ τὴν τῆς
καρτερίας. Secundi Presbyteri jam morituri verba ap.
Athanas. Epist. ad Solitar. p. 660. f Prov. 25. 21,
 22.

" him-

" himself will avenge thy quarrel,
 " and punish him so much the
 " more severely. This is the sense
 of that place, as appears by com-
 paring the Expression of *Coals of*
Fire, with the sense of it in other
 places of Scripture, where it al-
 ways signifies God's Vengeance^t.
 'Tis the voice of Nature, that Sin
 ought to be punish'd, and they
 who do evil should suffer evil. Nay
 'tis the Voice of God himself,
 whom our Saviour proposes to us
 as the Pattern of Love and Kind-
 ness which we ought to imitate^u:
 and yet the Scripture often repre-
 sents him as taking Pleasure and
 Satisfaction in the Destruction of
 Incurable Sinners, and *rejoycing*
at their Calamities^x. In Imitation
 of which Example the Righteous
 are said to *Rejoyce when they see*
God's Vengeance upon Sinners, and
wash their Feet in the Blood of the
Ungodly, [as it were trampling
 upon their Carcases in a Trium-
 phant manner] and to glorifie God
 upon such occasions, saying, *Veri-*
ly there is a Reward for the Righteous,
 R doubt-

^t See Pf.

18. 3, 13.

^u 120. 4.

^x 140. 11.

^u Matth.

5. 45.

^x Deut.

28. 63.

Pro. 1. 26.

Ic. 1. 24.

Ezek. 5.

13.

doubtless there is a God that judgeth in the Earth. In like manner, when the Enemies of God's people have fill'd up the measure of their Iniquities, and sinn'd beyond a possibility of obtaining Pardon, the Prophets denounce God's Judgments against them in a triumphant Style, and at the same time exhort all his Servants to rejoyce and praise God for making his Justice manifest. So we find the Prophet *Isaiah* breaking forth into Joy upon such an occasion, ² *O Lord, thou art my God, I will exalt thee, I will praise thy Name. — For thou hast made of a City a Heap, &c.* And to the same purpose he speaks a little after ^a. So *Jeremy* when he foretells the Destruction of *Babylon*, says, ^b *The Heavens and Earth and all that is therein shall sing for joy: and exhorts God's people particularly, to declare in Zion the works of the Lord their God*. And when *Mystical Babylon* falls in the *Revelations*, the *Apostles* and *Prophets* are exhorted to *Rejoyce over her* ^d: and the heavenly Host are represented

³ Pf. 58.
10, 11.

² Is. 25. 1,
2.

^a Is. 26. 5,
6, 11.

^b Jer. 51.
48.

^c Ver. 10.

^d Rev. 18.
20.

sented as giving Solemn Thanks
 and Praise to God for Executing
 his Judgments upon her^e. And al-^e Rev.
 though in such general Judgments, 19. 1, &c.
 Children which are Innocent usu- See c. 11.
 ally suffer as well as the Guilty, 16, 17, 18.
 yet since God has a Right to take - 15. 2, 3,
 away their Lives when and in 4-16. 5,
 what manner he thinks fit, with-
 out the Imputation of Injustice
 or Cruelty; and the involving
 Great and Small, Old and Young in
 the same common Destruction,
 adds much to the Dreadfulness
 and Severity of the Judgment, and
 consequently makes it more Ex-
 emplary, upon this account 'tis
 lawful to wish with the Psalmist^f, f Pf. 109.
 that God's Judgments may come 9, &c.
 upon the Children of Notorious - 137. 9.
 and Implacable Enemies: and this
 not out of a principle of Hatred
 and Revenge, but only out of a
 Desire to see his Judgments made
 more manifest hereby to the
 World. And as for the Psalmists
 pronouncing the Executioners of
 this Decree of God's *Blesseds*, at g Pf. 137.
 which Mr. N. is so much offen- 9.

b Fr. p.
229.
Eng. p.
25.

i Jer. 25.
9.-27. 6, 7.
8.-43. 10.
50. 14,
21, 26,
29.
Ezek. 29.
19.
4 Jer. 48.
10.

ded^b, there are many Expressions like this in the Prophets: where they incourage and commend, and promise a Reward to those men who are to be Executioners of God's Judgmentsⁱ, and pronounce a Curse^k upon those who will not joyn in bringing his Will and Purposes to pass. And where the Prophets exhort and incourage men to fulfill God's Judgments, the Design of such Expressions is only to set forth in a Pathetical and Vehement manner, how desirous the Holy Writers are that such a Work should be accomplish'd, that will so much tend to the Illustrating God's Glory.

I think there is no sort of Imprecations used in the Psalms, but something which has been offer'd in these Three Considerations will reach to, and will be a sufficient Defence and Justification of. Only I will add one brief Remark, for the sake of those who do not converse with the *Originals* or the *Ancient Versions* of the Bible, and that is this; That the word^l which

שׂוֹחֵל

is

is sometimes Translated *Hell* in the Psalms, and in several other places of the Old Testament, signifies only the *Grave*, and ought to have been always Translated so, to prevent the Misunderstanding of these places. So that when the Psalmist says, *" Let Death come hastily upon them, and let them go down quick in-^{mPsal. 55.} 15. to Hell,* the Expression sounds harsh to a Vulgar ear, and taking it in the most obvious sense of the words can hardly be defended, but it really means no more but this, " Let them suddenly go down " into the Grave, before they have " time to accomplish their Wicked " Designs: the later words being the same sense with the former, only differently express'd.

Next in order to the Psalms are the *Proverbs*, and therefore I shall in the next place consider the Objections which our Author advances against them. One would think that the Character which the Sacred History " and all ages have given to *Solomon*, of being indow-^{m 1 Kin. 3. 12.} ed by God with an Extraordinary

Degree of Wisdom above all other men : together with what he says of himself, that he imploy'd this Talent to the Instruction of the people, and *gather'd together many Proverbs* ° to that end : and besides all this, the Authority of the Jewish Canon, especially when 'tis confirm'd by a *Greater than Solomon*, our Saviour CHRIST, and several Passages of this very Book directly quoted by his Apostlesⁿ, and other places plainly alluded^a to by them : I say, one would be apt to conclude that all these Considerations added to the Intrinsic Worth of the Book it self, might be a sufficient Inducement to look upon it as a Book compos'd by God's Appointment for the Benefit of the Church.

° Ecclef.
12. 9.

¶ Rom.
12. 20.
Hebr. 12.
5, 6.
Jam. 4. 6.
1 Pet. 5. 5.
¶ 2 Cor.
8. 21.
1 Pet. 4.
18.

¶ Fr. p.
278.
Eng. p.
105

But before I proceed any further upon this Subject, I cannot but reflect by the way upon a Passage of our Author, which the observing that this Book is quoted by the Apostles puts me in mind of, and that is this: He tells us *That the Apostles never cite the works*

works of Solomon or the Book of Job. What he says touching the former, I have just now shewed to be manifestly False, and there is as little truth in the later part of his words : for the Book of *Job* is as formally quoted by St. Paul^t, as any Book of the Old 1 Cor. Testament, *The Wisdom of the* 3. 19. *world is Foolishness with God, FOR IT IS WRITTEN, He taketh the Wise in their own Craftiness.* Which Citation, as 'tis certainly taken out of *Job^t*, so it shews withal a 1 c. 5. 13. great Deference given by the Apostle to the Authority of the Book from whence 'tis taken. I thought fit just to observe this Mistake of Mr. N.'s, tho it be of no great consequence, on purpose to take down the Confidence of this Gentleman a little, and shew him that he is not so exactly vers'd in the Scripture, as a man that undertakes to Criticize upon it with so much Capriciousness, and so little Reverence and Regard to its Authority, ought to be.

a Fr. p.
271.
En. p. 24

But to return to the Matter in hand. The Sum of the General Charge which our Author has advanc'd against the Divine Authority of the Book of *Proverbs* is ^a, *That they are Moral Sentences which a Good Man may pronounce without Inspiration.* As if no Book could be writ by God's Direction, but where the matter is such as exceeds the reach of Humane Invention, and cannot be the Product of our Rational Faculties. And then by the same Reason no work must be ascribed to God, but what exceeds the Power of Natural Agents; and so God must be accounted the Author of nothing that happens in the World, but what is purely Miraculous. Now this Argument if it prove any thing at all, it proves not only that this Book is not written by Divine Inspiration, but farther, that no Book of Moral Instructions can be. For Morality is nothing but the *Law of Right Reason, instructing us how to govern our Actions*; and I suppose the Law of Reason contains nothing in it above

bove Reason, and Consequently nothing which is above the Capacity of a Wise and Good Man to think or speak: from all which it will follow, by our Authors Principles, that whatever Book contains nothing in it but what is deducible from the Principles of meer Reason, must be purely Humane, and can have nothing Divine, or of the Hand of God in it. But is not Mr. N. sensible that the Corruption of Humane Nature, the Degeneracy of the World, the Uncertainty of Humane Reasoning, and especially the Imperfect Knowledge we have of the Nature of God and our own Souls, have so far Obscur'd a great many branches of this Law of Nature or Reason, that there was need of a more than Ordinary Illumination, to recover some Truths which were in a manner lost to the World, and to set them in a True Light, so as to Convince others of their Certainty and Excellency? Sure our Author will grant, that the Unity of the God-head

head is a Truth that is Adequate to Humane Reason, nay a Truth so Evident, that one would wonder that Men of Searching Heads could miss of it; and yet we find there were very few among the Heathens that had their Reason so thoroughly purg'd from the prejudices which Education and the Establish'd Religion of the World had infected it with, as to assent to this Truth. And I think this is a sufficient Proof that Men may stand in need of a Teacher Divinely Inlightned to Discover such Truths to them, as may indeed be deduced from the Principles of Reason when 'tis in its true perfection, but yet are such as few Men's Reason hath arriv'd to, because of the Degeneracy and corruption to which 'tis obnoxious. And many such Truths are to be found in this Book, which tho they are so reasonable that Men can't but assent to them assoon as they hear them, yet 'tis in vain to search for them in the Writings of the Best and Acutest Philosophers. For
Instance,

Instance, we may challenge them to shew such a Wise Instruction in any of their Books as *Solomon* lays down for the foundation of Morality, ^b *The fear of the Lord is the* ^{6 Prov.} *beginning of Wisdom*: or this, ^c *Trust* ^{1. 7. Prov.} *in the Lord with all thy Heart and* ^{3. 5, 6.} *lean not to thy own Understanding, In all thy ways acknowledge him.* And indeed thro the whole Book the Duties of Morality are inforc'd upon Men from Religious Considerations, and by Arguments taken from the Duty we owe to God, and the Rewards and Punishments we must expect from him, according as we behave our selves. Which makes this Book differ very much from the Moral Writings of the Philosophers, where we shall find little or nothing said concerning our Duty to God, his Authority over us, our Dependance upon him, and the Submission we owe to him, the Methods of Providence, and the Rewards or Punishments of another Life, all which are often insisted upon in this Book. For this is a visible Defect

Defect in the Writings of the Philosophers, that as they never inforce our Duty by Arguments which are taken from the Principles of Religion: so their dissuasives from Vice are taken from these Topicks, *viz.* That 'tis below the Dignity of Humane Nature, and a Contradiction to Reason, rather than from this Consideration, That 'tis displeasing to God, a Breach of his Law, and an Act of Disobedience which he will Punish. I Confess some Philosophers that lived since the Appearance of Christianity, especially the Emperor *Antoninus*, have very Excellent Sayings concerning God's Providence, and the Submission we owe to him. But I am apt to think, that as the Light of the Gospel Diffus'd it self over the World, it in some measure Inlightened the minds even of those who Refus'd to imbrace it, as the Sun gives Light before it reaches our Hemisphere. My meaning is, that the very Account which Inquisitive Men received of the Principles

ciples of Christianity helped to Clear up their minds, and gave them more distinct Apprehensions of the Principles of Natural Religion than they had before.

But to return; Beside the Precepts I have already mention'd, there are many Excellent Advices given in the *Proverbs* to all sorts and Degrees of Men, from Princes and Magistrates to the meanest of their Subjects. And 'tis meer Cavilling in this Author to say^d, *d Ubi* That the Directions about Good *supr.*

Husbandry and House-keeping, Country People know without Inspiration: as if it were below the Wisdom of an Inspired Teacher, to admonish the meanest of their Duty; (as certainly 'tis every Man's to be Diligent in his Calling) and encourage them to attend upon it^e:

or as if People had not need to be put in mind of their Duty, altho they knew it before. As little weight is there in what he saith^f concerning the Caution which this Book so often gives Men against *Suretieship*, or being Bound for others,

^e See Tit. 3. 14. where the Apostle gives the same sort of Advice: *f Ubi supr.*

others, as if it amounted to a total forbidding Men the Exercise of this sort of Charity. I grant him this may be in some Cases a very good Act of Charity; but if we consider it as 'tis generally practis'd, (and *Proverbial Sayings* are to be understood only to hold true in *Most cases*) we shall find such ill Effects of it, that 'tis not only Wise but Religious Advice to warn men against it. Experience tells us that men are often Bound for more than they are able to pay, which is the very Case *Solomon* speaks of & in some of those places Mr. N. refers to, and so injure the Creditor as well as undo themselves and intail Misery upon their Families, which a man is bound in Justice as well as Charity to provide for in the first place. And Suretiship when it brings men to Beggary, at the same time exposes them to those dangerous Temptations to sin, which always accompany extreme Want. Upon these accounts Suretiship is oftner the occasion of a great deal of
In-

2 Prov.
22. 26, 27.

Injustice and other Wickedness, than the Exercise of Charity. And since these are the usual Consequences of it, 'tis very good Advice to warn men against it, and as proper for this Book as any whatsoever, since the Rules of it, as I observ'd just now, are design'd only for *Wise Observations grounded upon Experience*, which are generally True, but are not to be taken so strictly and rigorously as if they never fail'd in any one Instance ^h.

As to what Mr. N. objects ⁱ against the Collection of Proverbs ascribed to *Agur* ^k, if I should grant him that they have nothing of Inspiration in them, I do not see how it prejudices the Authority of *Solomon's* Proverbs at all. For *Solomon's* Character will go a great way to Intitle his Proverbs to Inspiration, whereas these are the Sayings of an Unknown Author, who does not pretend to have been bred up in the *Schools of the Prophets* ^l, which were look'd upon as the Nurseries of Inspir'd Writers.

h v. Grot.
in Matth.
12. 30.
i Ubi
supra.
k Prov.
30.

l See Ep.
Patrick's
Paraph.
upon
Pro. 3c. 3.

Writers. I know some Learned Men fancy both this and the 31st. Chapter to be Sayings of *Solomon*, as well as the foregoing; but as they bring no Proof for what they say, so 'tis altogether unaccountable why *Solomon* should disguise himself under two such different Names, neither of which have the least Affinity with his own. Now supposing the two last Chapters of the Proverbs to have been writ by Uncertain Authors, and added to *Solomon's* by some Private hand, and afterward to have been continued by those that Copied the Holy Writings, as we see *Additions* have been made to *Daniel* and *Esther* in the *Greek* Bibles, and as 'tis probable the *Hellenists* join'd these and the other *Apocryphal* Writings with the Canonical as early as our Saviour's time: upon this Hypothesis, Mr. N.'s Objections against this part of the Proverbs fall short of the Mark, and do not prejudice the Authority of *Solomon's* Proverbs at all. And this Supposition I think has nothing of
 Absurdity

Absurdity in it, nor can any Con-
 sequences be drawn from hence
 to weaken the Authority of the
 Jewish Canon. For if we should
 suppose these two Chapters to be
Apocryphal, it will neither follow
 that we cannot tell what is Cano-
 nical and what not, nor that there
 may have been Additions made to
 Books which are all of a piece and
 go all under one and the same Au-
 thor's name. We can conclude no-
 thing from hence but this, that
 wherever we find a Writing, bear-
 ing the name of an Unknown Au-
 thor added to a Book whose Au-
 thor is known, without any ne-
 cessary Dependence upon, or Con-
 nexion with the Book that goes
 before or that comes after, in such
 a Case only, 'twill follow from
 this Hypothesis, that we have no
 Reason to think both those Wri-
 tings to be of an Equal Authority.
 And since this is the only In-
 stance that can be given in all the
 Old Testament, of a small Wri-
 ting made an *Appendix* to a greater
 meerly because of the Affinity of

the Subject, whatever Hypothesis we admit concerning these Two Chapters, it can be no Prejudice to any other part of the Old Testament Canon, because there's no Instance can be given of a like nature.

But whatever I have said upon this Point, I propose only by way of Supposition, and meerly out of a Design to shew that whatever Objections Mr. N. thinks he can make against these *Additions* to the *Proverbs*, they do not at all diminish the Authority of *Solomon's* Writings. For indeed the Authority of the Jewish Canon weighs so much with me, and the Jews seem to have been so scrupulous of admitting any Writing into their Canon, without due Examining whether it deserv'd to be receiv'd into it or not, that I must confess I cannot easily bring myself to think there are any *Apo-cryphals* among the *Hebrew* Writings of the Old Testament. As for the *Greek* Writings and Translations, we know that the *Hellenists* were much more Easie and
Remiss

Remiss as to this matter, and allowed great Liberty to Transcribers and Commentators to make such Additions to the Text, which in their Opinion did tend to Illustrate it. But the Jews being Scrupulous of Adding to, or Diminishing from the Text, even to Superstition, I think it Unjust to conclude that any part of their Canon is of doubtful Authority, from one single Instance which some may fancy looks suspicious. And therefore taking this *Prophecy* or *Collection*^a of *Agur's* to have the same External Authority with the rest of the Jewish Canon, I cannot see that the Internal Matter of it affords any Reason to the Contrary. For there are many wise Observations and a great deal of good Advice contain'd in it, and his *Prayer to God for a Competency*^b is a very Excellent one, and is so much the more to be valued, because all the Heathen Philosophers were puzzl'd how to advise others about the matter of their Prayers^c, what Blessings 'twas proper to ask

משנ.

b Prov.

30. 8, 9.

c See

Platon.

Alcibiad.

2. Juvenal.

Sat.

10.

*d Perf.**Sat. 2.**Horat. 1.**2. Sat. 3.**Epist 16.**l. 1.**e Prov.**30. 2.*

of God, and the Vulgar put up very Absurd and Ridiculous Petitions to their Gods^d. And for those places of this Chapter which are more liable to Exception, if Mr. N. would have consulted what Learned Commentators have said upon them, he would not have thought them so Useless and Trifling as he pretends. But our Author himself seems to be at a loss for Objections, since he is willing to take Advantage of *Agur's modest Confession of his own Ignorance^e*, and concludes from thence that he can be a man of no Authority. But I believe Mr. N. is the first that ever thought a man's Modesty a sign that he wanted Wisdom, or that Humility made a man Unqualified for Receiving the Influences of God's Spirit.

Our Author objects nothing against *Ecclesiastes* and the *Canticles*, but what has been Objected several times before, and as often Answered: for which reason I shall be more Brief in Refuting him.

'Tis certain that the Design of
Eccle-

Ecclesiastes is to set forth the Vanity of Humane Life, which *Solomon* does by shewing how Empty and Unsatisfactory all those Ends are which men usually propose to themselves, as the greatest Happiness this World can afford: such as are Knowledge^f, Pleasure^g, Honour and Authority^h, and lastly Richesⁱ. Further, he takes notice how men's Ignorance, and the Obscurity in which the Great and Weighty Points concerning the Immortality of the Soul, a Future State, and the Methods of Providence are Involved, do occasion a great deal of Misery and Trouble to Mankind. Whilst Ill men take advantage of the Difficulties which may be objected against these Truths, and from thence conclude that there's no Providence nor Future Judgment, and thereby harden themselves in^k Wickedness, or give themselves up to Sensuality, and say, *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we shall die*^l. And even good men are now and then in a great Perplexity about these things,

f Eccles.

1.

g Ch. 2.

h Ch. 3.

and 4.

i Ch. 5.

and 6.

k Ch. 8.

11, 14.

ch. 9. 3.

l Ch. 3.

18, &c.

by reason of the Obscurity and Difficulties with which they are beset, and begin to doubt and stagger in their Faith^m. If men would therefore view the Scope and Design of the whole Book, and not take it by Piece-meal or examine each Sentence apart, they might easily see, that when the Author proposes Doubts concerning Providence and a Future State, he does not speak his own Sense: for in several places he plainly asserts God's Ordering and Disposing of all thingsⁿ, and speaks of another Life and a Future Judgment, with the greatest Clearness and Assurance of any of the *Canonical Writers* of the Old Testament^o. And therefore the Design of those other places which seem at first to contradict these, is only to shew that the Obscurity of these Great Articles of Faith, had often fill'd his own and other good Men's minds with Perplexing thoughts, and that the Generality of Men took Encouragement from thence to mind only

Ch. 1.
13.-8. 16,
17.

Ch. 3.
11, 14.
-7. 13.
-9. 1.
-11. 5.
Ch. 3.
17.
-11. 9.
-12. 7. 14.

only Sensual Pleasures, and make no Conscience of Injuring and Oppressing others. So that the uncertainty and Imperfection of Humane Knowledge as to these things, was a great Ingredient in the Vanities of Life: and one of those *sore Travels which God hath given to the Sons of Men, to be exercised therewith* ^{P.} And we may ^{p Eccles. 1. 13.} observe, that when he mentions the Doubts concerning the Immortality of the Soul, he Introduces them with this Preface, ^{q c. 3. 18.} *I said* in my Heart לִי-דַבַּרְתִּי בְּנִי הָאָדָם; which may very properly be rendered, *According to the words or way of speaking used among the Generality of Men*: and 'tis the very same Phrase as καὶ ὡς ἄλλοι λέγουσιν, which St. Paul uses ^{r Rom. 3. 5.} in a like Case, where he does not speak his own Sense, but sets down an Inference which Wicked Men would be apt to make from what he had said.

But if any desire further satisfaction concerning this Book or the *Song of Solomon*, I must refer them to that Excellent *Commentary*

which the *Reverend and Learned Bishop Patrick* has Publish'd upon these two Books, where he has with great Clearness explain'd the Sense and Design of them both, and particularly as to the Latter, has shewed ^t, how fitly the *Mystical Union between Christ and his Church*, is Represented in it under the Persons of a *Bridegroom* and *Bride*: that Allegory being agreeable to the Notions of all the Prophetical Writers of the Old Testament, who constantly express God's being in Covenant with the Jews by his being *Married*, and a *Husband* ^t to them; and in pursuance of the same Metaphor, reprove their Idolatry under the names of *Adultery* ^u, *Fornication*, and *going a Whoring after other Gods*: and the same Metaphor is alluded to by Christ and his Apostles in the New Testament ^x. All which is made out by that Reverend and Excellent Author with so much Learning and Exactness, and does so fully Vindicate this Book, from the Rash Censures of those who have

f Preface

† Pl. 45.

If. 54. 5.

-62. 4. 5.

Jer. 3. 14.

-31. 32.

Hof. 2.

2. 7. 16.

Ezek. 16.

8.

u If. 57.

7. 8.

Jer. 3.

1. &c.

Ezek.

16. 15.

&c.

-c. 23.

Hof. c. 1.

& 2.

x Matt.

22. 2.

Joh 3.

28. 29.

2 Cor. 11.

2.

Eph. 5.

31. 32.

Rev. 19.

7.

-14. 4.

have doubted of its Authority, and from the Profane Interpretations which some Wanton Fancies have applied to it, that 'twould be Unpardonable Presumption for me to think I can add any thing upon this Subject, to that Great Man's Judicious and Accomplisht Labours.

T H E
C O N C L U S I O N.

ANd now I have Finish'd my Undertaking, and have given a particular Answer to all the Arguments Mr. N. has advanc'd against the *Divine Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures*. I have not to my Knowledge pass'd by any thing which is of Weight in any of the Letters, nor dissembled the True Force of any of the Objections contain'd in them. And upon the whole matter it appears, that

that the Main Strength of the Book may be Compriz'd in this one Argument, viz. *That Book can't be of Divine Authority, nor Written by God's Direction, where there are any Marks of Humane Industry, and of Men's making Use of their Natural Talents of Memory or Invention in the Composure.* The Falseness of which Assertion I have shewed in several places of the Foregoing Discourse: and at present I shall only make this further Remark upon it, for a Conclusion of the whole Discourse; viz. That at the same Rate of Arguing a Man might prove that God had no Hand in Governing the Ordinary Course of this World by his *Providence*, nor Fitting Men for the Next by his *Grace*. For we see nothing brought to pass in the World without the help of Natural Agents, and God requires Men to *work out their Salvation* with as much Care and Diligence, as if he gave no Grace at all. And in either Case 'tis very hard to Assign just how far Nature goes,
or

or exactly to Define how much Second Causes contribute toward the Production of the Effect, and how much is to be ascribed to God. I would not be misunderstood, as if I thought the Writing of the Scriptures owing to God's Providence, no otherwise than as other common Events in the World are, or that there was no greater Degree of Divine Grace and Assistance went to the Composing of them, than does to the making other Pious and Good Books. I hope I have made it appear that these Books were Design'd by God for *the Perpetual Use and Instruction of the Church, to be a Fixt Rule of Faith and Manners*, and the Standard by which all other Doctrines and Practises are to be Tried. And then I think 'tis to Reflect both upon the Wisdom and Goodness of God, to suppose that he did not Assist the Holy Writers with such a Degree of Infallibility, as was requisite to make their Writings serviceable to that End. But still I believe that the

Extra-

Extraordinary and the Ordinary Means of Grace agree in this, that in both Cases God never affords Supernatural Assistance to do that which Natural Causes are sufficient to Effect of themselves: and that his Constant Method is to let Natural Means go as far as they can, and then supply the rest himself.

And if Mr. N. had well considered this, he might have spar'd his pains in Writing this Treatise. Or however Innocent his Intentions might be in Writing it, yet it was not so Prudently done in the Editor to Publish it, when at the same time he was sensible ^a that *very Ill Consequēces might be drawn from it*: and he could not but think that Bad Men would greedily catch at them, and make what advantage they could of them. I am as little for an *Implicit Faith*, or *Building Sacred Truths upon False Principles* as he or his Interpreter ^b: but yet I think a Man ought to be well Advis'd, and very sure he is in the Right before he ventures to Unsettle

a v. Fr. p.
24^c, 24⁷.
Eng. p.
51. 54.

b Eng.
Pref. p. 7.

settle Foundations. I find the Pub-
 lisher himself is of the mind, that
all Truths are not to be spoken at all
times, especially when 'tis likely they
will do more Harm than Good^c: and
 therefore I wonder he should set
 such a value upon that which at
 best is but a Probability, (for he
 himself^d looks upon this Hypo-
 thesis to be no more) as to venture
 the Publishing it at the Expence of
 the most Important Truths. And
 tho we should suppose the Princi-
 ples Mr. N. has advanc'd in his Trea-
 tise to be True, yet I can't look up-
 on them to be of such Importance,
 but that *'twere better the Publick*
should be deprived of the Advantage it
might draw from the Knowledge of such
Truths, than to be visibly Expos'd to the
Danger of Abusing them so lamentably
as it will be apt to do: which the Pub-
 lisher tells us^e was the Opinion of
 several Learned Men concerning
 these Papiers. And I don't see any
 thing that he has said to the con-
 trary, hath force enough in it to
 make these Gentlemen alter their
 minds. For as to what he^f al-
 ledges,

c Eng.
 123, 124.
 Fr p. 219.

dv. Fr p.
 215, 221.
 Eng. p.
 51, 127.

e Fr. p.
 218.
 Eng. p.
 122.

f Fr. p.
 221.
 En. p. 126

ledges, that *these Principles may be made use of to overthrow the Pretences of Libertines*; tho I grant 'twere better men should believe as much of the Scriptures as Mr. N. does, than none at all, yet I conceive it a very improper way to go about to convince Infidels of the Authority of the Bible, by telling them that several of those Writings which go under that Name, are meer *Fiction and Romance* ^g, and *Pieces of Wit and Fancy* ^h: that other things in that Book are writ *with Excessive Choler, and Impatience* ⁱ, and *unworthy not only of a Pious man, but even of an Honest and Wise Heathen* ^k. Nay that some of the Writings that go under the Venerable Name of God's Word *maintain the Principles of Libertinism it self* ^l, and have *Expressions in them very like Blasphemies* ^m. These and such-like goodly Titles does this Author bestow upon several of those Writings which Christ and his Apostles, and the whole Christian Church ever since, have look'd upon as the Word of God, and *written for our Instru-
tion*

g Fr. p.
248. 253.
Eng. p.
164, 170.
h Fr. p.
274. 285.
Eng. p.
99. 116.
i Fr. p.
228.
Eng. p.
24.
k Fr. p.
275.
Eng. p.
100.
l Fr. p.
273.
Eng. p.
96.
m Fr. p.
275.
Eng. p.
101.

tion. Certainly this Method, to
 use Mr. N's own words, ⁿ *Instead of* ^{n Fr. p.}
Converting Libertines, does but excite ^{281.}
their Raillery, and confirm them in their ^{Eng. p.}
Impiety. ^{100.}

At least if the Publishers of such
 Tracts as this, have a mind to con-
 vince the World that they design
 no Harm to Religion, they ought
 to Publish them in the *Learned Lan-*
guage, that none but Scholars may
 Read them. For the Publishing such
 Writings in Vulgar Languages
 proves a snare to Men of Unsettled
 Heads and Vicious Inclinations.
 They have not Capacity enough to
 Examine the true Merits of the
 Cause, or to weigh Exactly what
 can be said on both sides, in such
 Nice and Difficult Subjects: and
 therefore they presently run away
 with any thing that seems to make
 against Religion, without consi-
 dering what can be said on the o-
 ther side, because they are glad to
 find any Pretence or Plea for Sin
 and Wickedness.

But if the *Editor* had no good
 reason for Publishing this Treatise,

o Engl.
Pref. at
the End.

I am sure the *Translator* hath much less for Printing it in *English*. He himself ° acknowledges that this Treatise is not *Calculated for the use of simple-hearted Pious persons*, nor consequently the Translation: tho one would think an *English* Translation were made for the use of Ordinary *English* Readers. But since he tells us these Discourses were not design'd for Plain, Honest, Illiterate Christians, I cannot imagine why they were Translated, except it were, as some other *Precious Treatises* have been of late, for the Benefit of Dishonest, Illiterate Atheists; and to furnish those *Wits* with Objections against the Scriptures, who set up for Advocates of Irreligion, and value themselves for reasoning out of the common Road, and not blindly following the Dictates of others: and yet for all their mighty Boasts, can only Repeat the Arguments which other Men put into their Mouthes, and those too must be *Construed* into *English*, before they can Understand them.

F I N I S.

